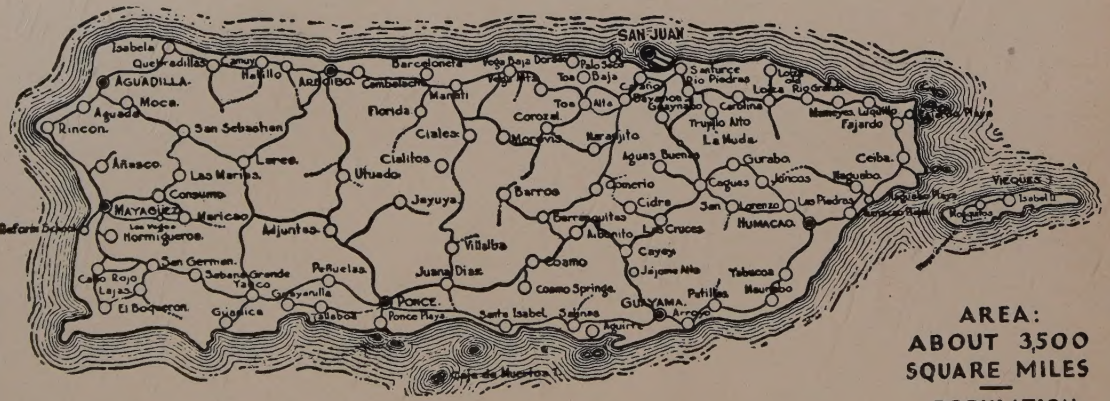
STORIES OF PORTO RICO

VAN DEUSEN

ATLANTIC OCEAN



AREA:
ABOUT 3,500
SQUARE MILES

POPULATION:
ABOUT 1,500,000

CARIBBEAN SEA

MAP OF THE ISLAND OF PORTO RICO SHOWING CITIES AND HIGHWAYS

STORIES OF PORTO RICO

BY

ELIZABETH KNEIPPLE VAN DEUSEN, Ph.B.

SPECIAL SUPERVISOR OF ENGLISH
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, SAN JUAN, PORTO RICO

SILVER, BURDETT AND COMPANY

NEW YORK NEWARK BOSTON CHICAGO SAN FRANCISCO

Copyright, 1926, by
SILVER, BURDETT AND COMPANY

First printing, 1926
Second printing, 1927
Third printing, 1928

Printed in the United States of America

PREFACE

It is with unusual pleasure that I welcome this new book which has been written expressly for the children of Porto Rico. Its author is Elizabeth Kneipple Van Deusen, whose charming poetry, inspired by the natural beauty, the fascinating history and the very life itself of our island, has found a lasting response in the hearts of all. But this is not a publication of her poems, as might have been expected by those who have read and admired the many creations of this young poet and awaited their appearance in book form. For she also writes delightful prose, as may be readily appreciated by a perusal of this collection of carefully selected short stories.

And what is the nature of these stories? Like the poems of this author, some of which are also included in this volume, they are suffused with local color, and their characters, young and old, have for the most part been sympathetically observed by her. In these pages live many native children who speak of their games, their gardens, their pets, their homeland, and their immediate environment, with that alert interest which such things always awaken in our boys and girls.

Into these narratives, written in exquisitely clear English, admirably simple and suited to the child's comprehension, the author has succeeded in combining all the grace of her style with the dexterity of her art. She has

made use of many Spanish names of persons and things which lend local atmosphere and heightened reality. Thus our Porto Rican terms are frequently employed in this book in English, as the most adequate means of indicating things Porto Rican. The author recognizes that our Spanish language, as well as every other, has its own particular terminology. For, even though we speak English correctly, our conversation will always require certain of our words and idioms to convey the exact meaning of that which is peculiarly ours, and which in our native tongue alone has true vitality.

These stories, composed in natural and piquant language, not only delight our boys and girls, but attract their attention toward aspects of our country and its people which perhaps have not previously been observed by them, and for this reason, we have adopted this volume as a textbook for the seventh and eighth grades of the schools of Porto Rico, in the belief that literature of such regional interest is needed to create in our children a real desire to read and to know more of their homeland.

We look forward to still further productions by this talented writer for use in other grades. Interested as she is in our life, and loving all things Porto Rican, this island has in her one of its most useful auxiliaries. Let us hope that her interest in such educational literature may long continue for the benefit of Porto Rico.

JUAN B. HUYKE
Commissioner of Education.

San Juan, Porto Rico,
June 17, 1926.

CONTENTS

PART I

	PAGE
Porto Rican Snow	1
Flamboyant Trees. *Poem*	8
Maria and the Fountain	9
Juan and the Bananas	20
The Crab Race	28
Anita's Garden	34
The Oxcart and the Automobile	42
The Sundial on La Fortaleza. *Poem*	49
The Street Venders	50
Fernando and the Pig	58
"Queso del Pais"	64
The Adventure of Andres	78
Luisa's Gift	83
Papa Quintero	97
The Two Statues	108

PART II

Carlos, the Brave Caminero	121
Dama de Noche. *Poem*	130
The Inheritance	131
Dolores	139
Borinquen. *Poem*	151
"Hombre de Oro"	152
Golden Fruit	166
Mirrors in La Fortaleza. *Poem*	177

PAGE

THE SPARK 178
FANTASIA. *Poem* 188
BLANQUITA 189
KITE SONG. *Poem* 198
THE DESERT 199
LA CRUZ DE MAYO. *Poem* 211
THE SPANISH EARRINGS 212
BLUE HILLS OF PORTO RICO. *Poem* 220
THE PUNISHMENT OF SANTIAGO 221
FRESAS 237

PART I

STORIES OF PORTO RICO

PORTO RICAN SNOW

One day, as they were walking home from school, Ricardo noticed that his newly arrived friend from the north looked very sad. "What is the matter, William?" he asked.

"Well, of course, I think Porto Rico is a very beautiful place—it's just wonderful"; William began, "but Ricardo, I guess maybe you have never been homesick."

"Homesick?" asked Ricardo. "What is that?"

"Well, when you are far, far away from your home, and you get a terrible feeling inside of you that you want to be *there* more than anywhere else in the world—that is homesickness," said William, placing his hand on his heart which was yearning for the northland.

"Oh," said Ricardo sympathetically, "I understand. But William, you should be happy. Christmas is only two weeks away. Then we have vacation and Santa Claus brings us many gifts. Also remember The Three Kings—they, too, bring us presents! Just think of it!"

"Yes," said William, brightening somewhat. "That is fine."

"And also," continued his little friend, eager to make him happier, "I should think you would be glad to get away from all that cold weather and snow, and——"

"That's just it!" cried William, interrupting him. "That's just what's the matter! Snow and cold weather! My goodness, Ricardo, if you only knew how homesick I am for them. Think of it—Christmas without snow and cold weather! Why, on that day we have our new sleds, and the ground is all covered with white snow, and we go out and slide! Oh, it is such fun!" But he finished so sadly that one listening to him, in spite of his words, might have imagined "sliding" the most gloomy sport in the world.

Ricardo was puzzled. "Sleds? Slide?" he asked. I believe I do not quite understand."

"Oh, I will tell you!" exclaimed William, eager to talk of his favorite winter amusement. "You see, the snow is not only cold and white, but it is also *slick.*" He saw that Ricardo did not understand this word either, so he tried to demonstrate by shuffling his feet along the sidewalk. "Like this," he explained. "Something like ice—you can move smoothly upon it. Then, the sled is a board and, instead of wheels, it has 'runners'—long polished bars of steel which will glide or *slide* over the snow. We climb to the top of a high hill, lie down on the sled—or sit upon it—and slide clear to the bottom—Oh, so fast—like a shooting star!" he finished, his eyes glowing with excited memories.

"I see! I see!" shouted Ricardo, now enthusiastic also. But suddenly he grew quiet; then a broad smile broke on his face. "Oh, William," he said breathlessly, "I have thought of something! But it is a secret," he added. "So, good-bye—until this afternoon."

The two boys parted, and Ricardo ran quickly home.

"Oh, mamá!" he cried, as soon as he caught sight of his mother, "is father going on the trip Saturday?"

"Yes, dear," answered his mother. "Why?"

"Do you suppose he would take me—and a friend too?"

"Perhaps," said his mother. "Why do you wish to go?"

Then, in great excitement, Ricardo told her his idea.

"That is a splendid plan," said his mother. "Surely your father will agree."

Finally, all preparations were made, and William had secured his parents' consent to accompany Ricardo and his father on the following Saturday. The two boys were so excited, they could scarcely study during the rest of the week.

Saturday was a lovely clear day. Starting very early in the morning, they glided swiftly over the military road towards Caguas. The sun had not yet peeped over the crests of the hills. It was misty and quite chilly. Ricardo laughed to see William creeping gratefully under the thick blanket that his mother had placed in the automobile. "This makes you feel like winter, doesn't it, William?" he asked.

"It surely does!" shivered William. "But I like it, Ricardo. It's the most pleasant feeling I have had since I landed in Porto Rico. Oh, look at the sky above those hills! It looks as though it were on fire!"

"Yes, that is our glorious sunrise," said Ricardo, and returning then to their former subject, he added: "But if you think it is cold here, you ought to spend a night in Aibonito or Adjuntas! There it becomes really cold—so you see *we* have winter as well as you!"

Ricardo's father frequently smiled to himself as he

listened to the conversation of these two happy boys. Soon they reached Caguas. Mr. Herrero, Ricardo's father, took them into a sunny *café* where they had their breakfast—and you may be sure they were hungry after their chilly drive. Then, when Mr. Herrero had transacted his business, they continued in the direction of Cayey. It would take many stories the length of this one to tell all of William's impressions of that delightful ride. But we are chiefly concerned here with Ricardo's secret.

After they left Cayey, Ricardo became very excited. He kept exclaiming to his father in Spanish *"¿Ahora? ¿Ahora?"*

"¡Todavía!" his father would reply.

As they approached a sharp turn in the road, Ricardo again asked his question.

"Sí; ahora," said his father finally.

"Close your eyes, William!" immediately shouted Ricardo. "Cover them with your hands, and do not open them until I say 'Look!' "

William, who was much mystified, did as he was told. On sped the car around the curve. William wished very much to look, for he knew the mountain scenery must be increasing in beauty every moment; but he obeyed Ricardo.

"Now!" presently shouted Ricardo.

William removed his hands quickly and opened his eyes. What a sight met his astonished gaze. There, for miles and miles far down the vast valley and covering the giant hillsides, lay fields and fields of—no! it was impossible! but *yes,* there it unmistakably was!—fields and fields of *snow*—white and beautiful—under a hot tropic sun!

William gasped. He rubbed his eyes. "Oh! Oh!"

Fields and fields of snow—white and beautiful—under a hot tropic sun!

he shouted. "Snow! ! !" He jumped up and would have fallen out of the car if Ricardo had not caught him. "Snow! Snow! Snow!" he cried again and again.

Ricardo and his father were both delighted now to see the boy so happy. Mr. Herrero stopped the car so William might gaze his fill on the strange and picturesque panorama stretched there before them.

"But snow!" he exclaimed wonderingly. "Ricardo, I cannot understand! And the sun is so warm! Oh tell me, why does it not melt?"

Ricardo laughed joyously. "But this is Porto Rican snow!" he replied, "and it never melts!"

"Never melts?" questioned the amazed William. "But that is a miracle. Even *our* snow melts!" "Yes"; said Ricardo, "but this is tropical snow!"

Finally Mr. Herrero explained to William that this snow was not made of crystallized vapor, but of white

cloth—miles and miles and miles of white cloth, sewed together to make a cool screen to protect the tender tobacco plants against the insects and the powerful elements of the tropics.

"What a marvellous sight!" said the happy William. "Now I shall have to write all about our 'tropical snow' to the boys back home who are so sorry for me. Why it *looks* just like it! The only difference," he added, a trifle regretfully, "is that you cannot *slide* on it. And such wonderful hillsides too!"

At this remark, Ricardo laughed again, but said nothing. Now they continued on their way towards Guayama, and soon entered a part of the country where the mountains were so high and steep that no more of the "snow-covered" tobacco fields could be seen. Ricardo told William that they had only disclosed *half* their secret; but more than that he refused to tell. Great were the wonders they saw that day, and many times, at some new and surprising sight, William was sure it was *the* secret.

"Not yet," Ricardo would answer.

It was afternoon when, after rounding the eastern end of the island, they came at last to the little village of Luquillo. When Mr. Herrero, who was a salesman, went to attend to his business in the town, Ricardo said to William: "Come with me."

He led him through the little narrow streets till they came to the handsome, new García Rivera School building. "Now close your eyes again!" commanded Ricardo.

William did so, and Ricardo took him by the hand. Soon he could hear joyous shouts and cries of many boys.

Those shouts had a familiar sound and he became very excited.

"Now, look!" exclaimed Ricardo.

Quickly William uncovered his eyes, and *what* do you suppose he saw? They were close down by the seashore, and to their right rose a steep hill all made of sand. But wonders of wonders! Upon this hill were a score of boys, each mounted on a *tigüero*—or large flower-sheath of the royal palm. And these jolly, happy boys were doing nothing else in the world but *sliding!*

"Sliding!" shouted Ricardo, triumphantly. "Sliding on tropical sleds!"

"Oh! Oh!" screamed William, beside himself with glee! "Come Ricardo, let us slide!"

Two of the friendly Luquillo boys lent them their palm sleds. They climbed as fast as they could to the top of the hill. Then, after the manner of the other boys, they sat down on the *tigüeros,* drew up their knees, put their feet close together, and grasping the palm sheath with both hands, started off. Down through the soft sand they flew. Ricardo, who had practiced this sport before, went safely to the bottom; but William, laughing, fell over halfway down into a pile of sand that his sled had pushed up. "Just like snow!" he exclaimed. "It piles up this way and we fall over into it!"

Again and again they slid down the great sand hill. "Why," said William, "it is even better than snow, because you don't freeze your toes and fingers and nose while doing it!"

Tired but happy were these two boys when they arrived in San Juan that evening. William thanked Ricardo a

million times and then ran home to tell his mother of the pleasures of the day's outing.

"And mother!" he finished, "I shall not be homesick any more—because we really have everything here that we have at home! Every place in the world can be like home if we simply see it through cheerful and willing eyes! Imagine—in one day I have felt *cold,* seen *snow* and been *sliding* downhill in *Porto Rico!*"

FLAMBOYANT TREES

PORTO RICO

In tropic spring
The flamboyánts are red, red, red—
Everywhere a flaming, brilliant red!

Here they carelessly shed rubies
From their graceful scarlet arches
Where they canopy the road
As for a king;

There they set a costly mansion
In a frame of crimson splendor
Or in some poor peasant's dooryard
Riches fling,

Till it seems the heart of Nature
Has been opened wide to scatter
Its bright ruddy drops afar
Such wealth to bring.

Oh! red, red, red bloom the gay flamboyánts,
Everywhere a flaming, brilliant red
In tropic spring.

MARIA AND THE FOUNTAIN

If you stand on the ancient sea wall and look up towards Casa Blanca, you will see many old and attractive Spanish houses. They are piled against the hillside like heaps of colored boxes—blue, pink, yellow, green, lavender and white. In one of these high-perched dwellings (though difficult to tell exactly which one) lived the family of Alvarez. The father, Pedro Alvarez, was only a poor tailor, and he and his wife had to work very hard to support their family, which consisted of five children, and Doña Isabel, the invalid sister of Don Pedro. Four of these children were healthy and strong, and seemed always to be hungry! But the fifth, little María, was pale and quiet. Once she had been very ill with a fever, after which she had become quite lame. The doctors said they did not know how to cure her. She could not go to school, so all day she remained home with her Aunt Isabel whom she loved very much. When they both felt well enough, Doña Isabel taught the school lessons to her niece.

The most agreeable place in the house, which was rather old and dark, was Doña Isabel's room. From one of the windows could be seen historic Casa Blanca and its gardens. The other looked out over the buildings of San Juan, to the lovely blue hills beyond the gleaming water of the bay, where ships were constantly moving. How often the two sat at this window! There were a

thousand things to see. They wou'd watch the women hanging strings and strings of bright-colored garments to dry on the wind-swept roof tops. And María thought she would like to enter all those homes where so many people must live to wear so many clothes! They could even see into the campanile of the cathedral where boys knocked the bells with stones to make them ring. Some-

Looking from the ancient sea wall towards Casa Blanca you will see many old and attractive Spanish houses.

times they scanned the bay and imagined themselves travelling to great foreign ports on the steamships, or going to strange hidden corners of the world on the sailing vessels. Oh! they thought of many pleasant and queer things to do, these two seated high up at their window. But they imagined the most delightful things of all when they looked beyond to the peaceful sunny hills. How they longed and wished to be there, thinking that far from the noise of the city, in those quiet and beautiful mountains, they would perhaps find freedom from their pain.

One day as they sat at the other window, Doña Isabel told the little girl the story of the famous Juan Ponce de León who, such a long time ago, when he was the first Governor of Porto Rico, caused Casa Blanca to be built. But he had never lived in it. "For," she said, "one day while he was sitting in his home at Caparra, there came to him Antonio de Alaminos, one of his lieutenants, who told him a remarkable story which had been related by the Indians. It concerned a marvellous fountain in a wondrous land to the northward, which they called *Bimini*. Whoever drank of the waters of this fountain would be insured of perpetual youth and health. Juan Ponce knew of the great curative qualities of the springs at Coamo, but thought it not impossible that there might be a still more powerful fountain elsewhere. Finally he took ships, turned his back on verdant Porto Rico, and went seeking the fabulous Fountain of Youth and Health in the legendary island of Biminí. All the world knows of his long wanderings, his terrible struggles, and of his failure which ended in Death. . . ." These were some of the words of Doña Isabel in telling the romantic tale of Juan Ponce.

When she had finished, little María was very silent. Both of these poor souls who were nearer to death than the people about them, were perhaps thinking mournfully of Juan Ponce's failure to find the miraculous fountain. All day María thought of this story, and when near sunset her strong brother Fernando helped her down to the sea wall below Casa Blanca, it was still in her mind. Many children were playing here in the last hour of the daylight and their shouts and laughter rose joyfully above the quiet town. The

west was ablaze with the glory of sunset. The invitation of the distant tranquil hills had never before seemed so urgent to María. Then she glanced up at Casa Blanca, and suddenly several questions occurred to her.

As soon as she came home, she hobbled to Doña Isabel and asked: "But why did Juan Ponce leave Porto Rico and sail away to other lands? Why did he not search here? Surely *this* is as good a place as another. Oh, *tía* Isabel, he should have gone into our beautiful blue mountains. There I am sure he would have found the Fountain of Youth and Health!"

Doña Isabel looked at the child sadly as she answered, "My dear, that is the way of the world, you will learn. When man is *here* he is sure he will find what he wants *there*. And so it is: he is forever going afar to seek what often lurks only slightly obscured at his own doorstep!"

Shortly after this, a physician told Don Pedro that his sister had but a few weeks to live. Don Pedro and his wife thought how this would affect the child who loved her aunt so much.

"It will be very hard for our María," said the mother anxiously.

"Ah, yes!" exclaimed the worried father, "and I think she grows frailer every day."

"Perhaps the shock will be too great for the poor child. Oh! what shall we do?" cried the mother in despair.

"I must think," answered Don Pedro. Then he had an idea. Let us send her to the mountains—to the coffee ranch of the good Señor García Martín. Often

he has asked me to let him take her. They go first to Barranquitas, and then away into the mountains on horseback. Angela, it is the very thing, and perhaps her health will improve."

"Yes," she answered, hesitating, because mothers never like to send their children away from home.

So little María said good-bye to her aunt and went to the mountains. Her family was surprised at how quietly and willingly she left. She was indeed paler than ever, but in some mysterious way she seemed almost happy to go. "Adios, darling *tía* Isabel," she whispered. "Wait for me, and I shall return soon!"

When María found herself in the mountains, she thought she had reached fairyland. The trees were twice as green and the flowers twice as bright as any she had ever imagined. And the air was so pure and sweet it felt as though she were drinking something strange and ambrosial when she breathed it. And how good and kind to her were the Señor and Señora de García! They placed a strong hammock on the *balcón* where she could lie and look down a long, misty wooded valley. They gave her large glasses of rich milk. And their two children, Pablo and Alicia, could not be attentive enough. They brought her flowers and fruits. Pablo gave her a carved and polished Indian hatchet which he had found. Alicia introduced her to a funny doll made of straw, with coffee berries for eyes.

They scarcely knew when it was that María began to go about and play with Alicia and Pablo. At first she only played a very short time before she grew weary. But she became stronger and stronger as the days went

by. She still used her small crutch, but it was very astonishing to see how fast she could travel upon it now. And her face was no longer pale and thin.

How she loved the mountains, and what a sight it was to see her climbing about them with the aid of her crutch! Soon Alicia and Pablo showed her many enticing secret places—caves, singing brooks and cool spots under the dense coffee trees. Then one day they showed her the spring. She said she was tired and would like to sit there a while. So they ran on and left her. Now María was sure she had never dreamed of a p'ace so enchanting. Far above her head extended the huge jutting cliff of the mountain, covered with thick green bushes and long hanging creepers. And from out this tangle, through the sunlight, sparkling like a thin shower of diamonds, fell a stream of cold, crystal-clear water into a little rock basin whence it flowed off in a narrow stream and was lost among the trees. And all around the basin in a fairy circle grew tall lacy tree-ferns, and beneath these were graceful bushes from whose twigs swung the airy fire-baskets of the wild hibiscus. The sunlight shone through the foliage in dancing patterns. Tiny yellow birds flitted over the pool, adding their musical twitter to the tinkle of trickling water. All else was still, with that strange wonderful silence only found in such remote and secluded places. María dipped with her cupped hand into the basin and sipped some of the water which was colder and sweeter than any she had ever tasted. She did this again. Then eagerly she went down on her knees and drank long from the pool. When she rose, her whole face was wet and glorified, and raising her eyes, she whispered thanks to the Virgin. Then she heard the children call-

ing her and she started to go, almost forgetting her crutch!

Every day after this she came and drank of the fountain. Now it was encouraging indeed to see her improvement. She still carried the crutch; but they noticed she scarcely used it. She seemed to be full of some shining secret, so happy was her pretty face.

"It is marvellous—the progress of that child!" exclaimed the good Señor García to his wife.

"Yes," she answered. "How delighted her poor mother and father will be!"

They stood on the *balcón* watching the old servant Felipe, who was winding his way slowly up the valley on the back of a little horse. He was always eagerly awaited, for in his saddle bags he brought mail and supplies from Barranquitas. But on this day he carried sorrowful news. Señor García read the letter from Pedro Alvarez aloud to his wife. Part of it was as follows: " . . . . and she is very, very ill indeed. All the time the poor soul keeps calling for her *sobrinita.* In fact it seems that she cannot die and be relieved of her pain until she has seen the child once more. So, if María is as improved as you have written me, my good friend, I think it well that she should be returned to us in all haste."

They told María that her aunt was ill and that she must return to San Juan in the morning. Then she was very sad. "While I have been so happy in the mountains," she thought, "poor *tía* Isabel has needed me!" Soon she disappeared from the room.

"Poor child," they said, "she wishes to be alone with her sorrow."

If they could but have seen her then! She was fairly flying over the mountainside with her crutch clack-clacking on the stones. When she reached the fountain she was breathless. Then she found she had forgotten a cup. "Oh beautiful Fountain of Youth and Health," she whispered, "help me again. I *must* take some of your precious water to darling *tía* Isabel." She looked about on the ground. Soon she found a hollow, dried coconut shell. This she filled with the delicious water. Then she took one long last drink and one long last look at this spot where she had found such health and happiness. She saw that twilight had come. She must hasten. Carrying the water carefully, she turned towards home. It was hard to go with the heavy coconut in one hand and the crutch under her arm. Creepers brushed in her face and caught at her hair. Darkness was coming quickly. She must be oh so careful to save the magic water. Once she tripped and nearly fell. Some of it was spilt! Now she must be more careful than ever. All the time she kept thinking of poor *tía* Isabel and how she loved her. Again she stumbled on a narrow place and dropped her crutch. She could hear it clattering down the hillside in the darkness. But she could not recover it and she must go on. So she did, with surprisingly little difficulty. But she had lost some more of the water.

Finally, almost exhausted, she reached the house. They were searching for her everywhere. They were surprised to see her so covered with dust and with leaves in her hair. "I had to get some spring water for *tía* Isabel!" she gasped, holding out the coconut. "Here," she said, handing it to the servant. "Please

put it in a bottle for me. And please, oh please, be careful, for a great deal of it shook out and there is not much left. But I believe there will be enough." The Garcías were much mystified by all this, but they humored her at this time of sadness.

Now the servant in another room was preparing to do as she had been commanded. But she was a stupid girl. When she went to pour the water into the bottle, she saw that it was full of brown specks from being in the old coconut shell. "What can she want with a bottle of dirty water?" she thought. "I will just throw this out and give her some clean water from the well." This she did.

However, María not knowing it, carried the bottle, which she believed contained the precious water, all the way to San Juan. She held it tightly in her hands. In the excitement she had entirely forgotten about the lost crutch, and so had the Garcías.

In the high house in San Juan, Señor and Señora Alvarez kept anxious watch at the bedside of Doña Isabel, their dying sister. A doctor was there also. The windows were closed and a candle was burning beneath a household shrine of the blessed Virgin. Long, long, weary hours they had waited.

Suddenly the door opened and in ran a new María, so strong and well that she seemed to bring with her some of the fresh air from the mountains. She stopped only a moment when she saw the pale motionless figure in the bed. Then, with a cry, she ran forward. She put her mouth close to Doña Isabel's ear. "Wake up, darling *tía* Isabel," she whispered. "I have come. And see what I have brought you! You are never going to

be ill any more. Wake up and drink the water I have brought you from the mountains, for I have discovered the Fountain of Youth and Health!"

Doña Isabel's tired eyes opened and filled with gladness as she saw the beloved child. Then María took the bottle which she had carried so far and at such pains, and slipping her hand under her aunt's head raised it so that she might drink.

"Stop!" commanded the doctor. The father and mother in amazement stepped forward to prevent her action. But it was too late. Already, peering straight into the luminous eyes of the little girl, Doña Isabel had begun to drink. And then in that hushed room of sorrow, there happened a miracle, and into the place of death crept life—beautiful life, transcending mere earthly existence. For as Doña Isabel slowly drank the elixir from the small bottle, back into her pallid face stole color, animation and joy! The three spectators were astounded and speechless. But María was not surprised. Blissfully she watched the wondrous change.

Then what an hour followed. What admiration of Doña Isabel, looking so lovely and smiling as she sat propped up on a great white pillow! She held María's hand in her own, now moist and warm instead of cold and white! What solemn happiness and what deep reverence grew in every heart as the simple child told them the story of the wonder-working Fountain of Youth and Health. "And," she concluded, "Juan Ponce, you see, was mistaken, as I always thought after you had told me how he left our beautiful Porto Rico, *tía* Isabel!" And, looking at the radiant child, all these people easily believed that Juan Ponce had been mistaken.

Then Doña Isabel, with the light still in her face, said that now she would sleep. And a heavenly peace lay upon the high house that night, during which the soul of Doña Isabel quietly departed into life everlasting, carrying with it, no doubt, the knowledge of a small sick child transformed by faith into a strong and useful girl who would live a long and splendid life.

What matter if the ignorant servant had thrown out the real water of the fountain? What matter if we, in our wisdom, say there is no Fountain of Youth and Health? The water which little María carried through all those tedious miles and anxious hours, was drawn from a better and more exalted fountain than ever existed on this earth—the fountain of human love and faith in the Divine!

JUAN AND THE BANANAS

Naranjal is a small village in the mountains. It has only three stores. Most of its people are poor because there are very few ways of earning money. But I am going to prove to you that if you are willing, industrious and alert you can succeed even in so tiny a place as Naranjal.

One day a little boy named Juan went to one of the stores to get a wooden box for his mother. Some boys were playing in the street in front of the store. They were talking of what they would do when they were men. One boy said: "I shall be a policeman in a blue uniform!" and he began to march up and down. Another cried: "I shall work in a store!" And another, "I am going to be a soldier!" Then all the boys began to talk at once, so you could not tell what any of them was saying.

Juan stood thinking. Soon he spoke: "When I am a man I shall go to San Juan, where I shall earn a great deal of money. . . ."

"Ho! Ho!" laughed one of the boys. "How will you do that, Juan? What can *you* do to make money in the capital city?"

Juan looked at him severely. "I will do it," he said firmly, "and some day when I am rich I shall return to Naranjal. Then with my wealth and education I shall be very powerful. They will elect me mayor! I

shall make great speeches!" He threw down the box he was holding and stepped excitedly upon it. The other boys were silent, in some admiration, because Juan's ambition was greater than any they had thought of.

Upon his box Juan began to make a speech: "Respected public. . . ."

Honk! Honk! went a loud motor horn. The boys ran to the sidewalk. Juan jumped down, and picking up the box, put it on his head where he was accustomed to carry things.

The big automobile stopped between two of the stores. In it were a gentleman and a lady. "We want some bananas," called the gentleman to the storekeeper on the left.

"I do not have any," answered the store man.

"Americanos!" cried some of the boys, in spite of the fact that the man in the car had spoken in Spanish. They all came closer to see these people from the far-off United States.

"We want some bananas," called the gentleman to the storekeeper on the right.

"I do not have any," answered this man, also.

"What?" exclaimed the gentleman. "No bananas in Naranjal?"

"Here is a little boy with a box on his head," said the lady. Then she asked in English—"What do you sell, little boy?"

Juan had been to school and he understood her, but he was timid, so he only smiled.

"Well, then, let us go and look at the church and the plaza," said the man. "But how hungry I am! How I wish we could find some bananas!" He started

the automobile and turned down the side street to go around the plaza. This meant they must come back the same way in order to leave Naranjal.

Juan had an idea. He ran home as fast as he could. "Mamá," he cried, "give me the bananas!" He did not wait to explain, but snatching up some bananas from the table he put them into the box and ran out faster than ever. In a moment he was with the boys again. He was just in time, for there was the car returning. He jumped in front of it, and the gentleman stopped.

Juan was too much out of breath to speak, so he smiled as hard as he could.

"Why it is the same little boy!" exclaimed the lady.

"What do you have in that box, little boy?" asked the man in Spanish.

"Bananas! !" shouted Juan in English.

Then everyone was very surprised. In a moment the man and the lady began to laugh. "Well! well! well!" exclaimed the gentleman, "here is a real business man!"

"Oh!" laughed the lady, "just think! He did not tell me he had no bananas the first time. He just smiled diplomatically. Then while we were gone he ran somewhere to find the bananas. What a clever boy! Oh, do buy his bananas!"

"How much are they?" asked the gentleman, still smiling.

"Ten cents," answered Juan.

"You speak English?" asked the gentleman.

"Yes, sir," answered Juan. "I learn it in school."

"That is fine. What is your name?"

"Juan Costa, sir."

"Well, Juan, you did well in bringing us the bananas. What are you going to do when you are a man?"

"I am going to be a merchant in San Juan," was the quick response.

"And he will be the mayor of Naranjal!" cried another boy.

"Bravo!" laughed the man from the north. "I believe it!"

Now the gentleman reached into his pocket. He drew out—not ten cents—but a round silver dollar. The eyes of every boy became almost as big as the coin itself. No boy in that group had ever possessed so much money.

The gentleman spoke in Spanish now so all the boys could understand. "Juan," he said, "today you made your first step toward becoming a business man. I am going to help you. When you are older, you will learn that success is composed of ten parts. One of these parts is called 'Opportunity.' Eight others are called 'Hard Work.' One more is 'Luck.' Today you saw an Opportunity and made the most of it. Now I am going to give you this dollar. That is Luck. Christmas is eight weeks away. Then I am coming back and see if by Hard Work you have succeeded in converting this dollar into more dollars. This, Juan, is your chance! Make the most of it!" Then the gentleman gave Juan the bright dollar, and ten cents besides for the bananas, and he and the smiling lady drove away.

Now Juan was almost overcome with joy. All the boys envied him. They began to tempt him to buy *chicharrones,* and *dulces.* They were trying to spend his money for him; but Juan was thinking of what the man

had said. So he went home with his money. He gave his mother the ten cents. "Now I shall become a business man," he said seriously.

"How is that, Juanito?" asked his mother, who had to work hard all day long because the father was dead.

Then Juan showed her the dollar and told her of his experience. His mother looked longingly on the dollar. It took a great deal of hard, hard work for her to earn that much. She was very proud of her boy's cleverness. "You are a very lucky boy," she said. "Now you must work hard so you will not disappoint the kind stranger. If he sees that you are ambitious, he may help you to great things".

Juan was much perplexed. How to make his dollar grow! How to earn any money in Naranjal! He thought so much that he had a wrinkle in his forehead. Once he decided to ask his teacher to help him. Sometimes he thought of discussing it with the other boys. But no; he wished to succeed by himself alone.

For three days he could not think of anything. He sat sadly, eating a banana, and as he looked at it he thought of his adventure. Then, of a sudden, his face shone. He had another idea— Bananas! That was the way he had made his first dollar. For him, "bananas" were lucky. Why not go into the banana business?

The next day was Saturday. All morning Juan was busy behind his house, hammering and pounding and painting. In the afternoon he disappeared over the hills and was gone a long time. It was evening when he returned. He was almost falling under the weight of a handsome big bunch of bananas.

"But why did you not buy your bananas near Naranjal?" asked his mother.

"Because," answered Juan wisely, "the farther you go into the hills the farther you are from the places they sell bananas, and thus the cheaper are the bananas!"

That night Juan went down to the little drug store. There he bought for twenty-five cents an American Flag. Then he went to bed very, very tired. In a cup on the shelf he still possessed twenty cents of the famous dollar! And he was all ready for business.

The lady from the United States had never seen such a beautiful Christmas day! The sky was azure, and the bright sun made the vari-colored sea sparkle and turned the sails of the ships pure white. The bright poinsettias bloomed profusely in her dooryard. The palm trees swayed gently, and every frond was dazzling silver. She was never more happy. She said to her husband, "Do you remember what we are going to do today?"

"Yes," he answered, "we are going to visit our young friend in Naranjal."

"Do you know," remarked the lady seriously, "I believe we shall find that that boy has done something!"

"Yes," replied the gentleman, "if only the other boys did not persuade him to spend the money for candy!"

Over the beautiful blue Porto Rico mountains sped the car. The air was clear and cool. Hundreds of people were walking out, dressed in their best clothes, because it was Christmas day. Into Naranjal came the automobile—slowly because of the holiday crowd. A little boy jumped on the running board. *"¡A la plaza!"* he spoke proudly.

A friend of Juan's, taking bananas to San Juan for sale in the market.

"Why, I believe they were expecting us!" exclaimed the lady.

To the plaza they went. There were throngs of happy people. Then they saw Juan!

He was all dressed up in white and standing beside a white wagon which he had made himself. Four bamboo poles rose, one from each corner, and were drawn together at the top. From this apex hung a perfect bunch of Porto Rico's finest bananas. The cart underneath was heaped with bananas. The whole was decorated with many flowers. On a white streamer was painted in English "Merry Christmas," and rising above all was the American Flag. It was a pretty sight.

"A Merry Christmas, Juan!" called the man.

Juan smiled so that his face almost broke. He stood

erect and proud. "A Merry Christmas, *Señor* and *Señora!*" he said. All Naranjal knew of his adventure. All Naranjal crowded around him. Many cheers went up: "Bravo, Juanito! Viva!"

It was a great day. Juan led the lady and gentleman to his home. There he introduced them to his mother, and showed them eight dollars he had earned in the banana business! And better still, he showed them the ground behind his house. "I have brought here and planted one hundred small banana trees which I bought very cheaply far in the mountains," he said. "Soon I shall send bananas to San Juan!" Then his mother, with characteristic hospitality, served *refrescos* of orange and pineapple to everybody present, and there reigned the greatest possible happiness.

The gentleman and lady from the United States did become the friends of Juan, and there is not the slightest doubt that he will some day be the worthy mayor of Naranjal.

THE CRAB RACE

The little town of Cataño, situated on the lowlands across the bay from San Juan, appears almost like a village out of a fairy tale. Its quaint, many-colored houses with their shining red roofs, seem to rise directly out of the blue water against a background of green cone-shaped hills, behind which looms the long shimmering range of the distant mountains.

Along the roadsides just beyond the town and near the dense mangrove marshes, one may observe countless holes in the soft earth. These are the dwelling places of the awkward, scuttling land crabs. Antonio, who was a boy of nine years, liked nothing better, when he was not in school, than to dig for these crabs. To find and play with them was his greatest amusement. He never harmed these little creatures, any more than he would have harmed a dog or a cat, for they were his pets. He had a younger brother, Pepito, who was very much afraid of the fierce-looking crabs.

On his birthday, Antonio's father took him to San Juan in a ferry-boat. It was the first time he had ever been in this beautiful city, which he had admired all his life from the other side of the bay. While in San Juan they went to the *Cine*. Imagine Antonio's delight! One of the attractions on the program was a series of illustrated news items from all parts of the world—in other words, they were "Current Events" in pictures.

Among many interesting views projected on the screen, there was one which especially pleased Antonio. This was a picture of a turtle race, held in a western town of the United States. Hundreds of ugly turtles, each bearing a number, took part in this funny exciting contest. The turtles reminded Antonio of his land crabs.

When they were returning home on the ferry-boat, Antonio's mind was full of all the many pleasures of his evening in San Juan; but again and again he thought of the turtle race. Why not have a crab race? The idea enchanted him.

The next day in school he described what he had seen to his friends, and suggested that they hold a crab race. They all agreed with enthusiasm. "When shall we have it?"

"This afternoon!" cried several.

"No, that is too soon!" shouted others. "We must get our crabs first."

Finally they decided to hold it on the following Saturday. After this was settled, Pepito, who had listened anxiously to all they had said, began to cry loudly.

"What is it, Pepito? Are you hurt?"

"No," sobbed Pepito.

"Are you ill?"

"No."

"What *is* it, then?"

"So many crabs," wept the little boy. "Terrible crabs! I shall be awfully scared. Oh, please Antonio, tell them not to have the crab race!"

At this, all the boys shouted with laughter, and Pepito ran off home, crying harder than ever.

During the next few days, hardly anything was spoken

of amongst the boys of the town but the great Race of the Crabs. Everywhere boys were digging for these odd-looking animals. Each boy found many before he decided on the one which he would enter in the race. Then began the training. Tying a string loosely to one leg of his crab, a boy would make the poor creature run all about for exercise! Some boys had large crabs, some had smaller ones—each having selected the kind which he believed would run the fastest. The only ones who were not absolutely happy during all this were Pepito and the poor crabs. A crab's beady eyes, standing out on little sticks, are usually expressionless; but anybody looking at the eyes of *these* crabs, could easily imagine them full of misery. And as for Pepito, there was no doubt that he was truly wretched. He was torn on one side by his great fear of the awful crabs and on the other by his desire to participate in the race and, if possible, gain the prize! For by this time many people were interested, and one man had even offered a little live pig as a premium. Poor Pepito! He liked roast pig as much as he hated live crabs! It was indeed a difficult week for him.

When Saturday came, many people gathered near the schoolhouse to enjoy the unique sport. The track was very peculiar: it was arranged like the one Antonio had seen in the turtle race at the movies. In the centre of a broad open space, they set a round wire cage about three feet in diameter and open at the top. Twenty-five feet out from this, a white line was painted on the ground around the cage, so that it stood in the middle of the big circle. All the crabs were to be put into the cage, which, at a given signal, was to be removed. The crabs would

then start off in all directions, and the one which crossed the white line first would be the winner.

What excitement there was, with all the boys clamoring for the numbers which were being distributed by the three men who had been chosen as judges. They gave two tags bearing the same number to each boy—one for him to keep, the other to tie to his favorite. One boy wanted to enter a lobster in the race. At this, everyone protested, saying that it would eat the crabs. So the judges ruled the lobster out.

The impatient audience stood around the white circle, shouting for the race to begin.

Finally the time had arrived to place the crabs in the cage. Fifty boys were ready! Just at this moment Pepito came running up wildly. He had not conquered his fear of the crabs; but he had, as we say, compromised. He could not let the race take place without himself having a chance to win the pig.

"Wait! wait!" he called breathlessly. "I have a crab!"

But how the people laughed when they saw Pepito's crab! Being so terribly afraid of the big ones, Pepito had gone down to the seashore that morning, and secured one of those queer little red hermit-crabs which seldom leave their homes, but move along sideways in a most amusing manner, carrying their shell-houses with them. This tiny creature was Pepito's entrant! When he heard all the laughter, his face began to take on a twisted expression and his lips trembled. He was about to cry. Then the judges, not wishing anyone to be disappointed, hastily told him he might enter his crab. They knew it could not win the race, but they wanted to make him

happy. "You won't need any number," they said, "because your crab is different from all the rest!"

At this, everyone was more amused than ever, and again Pepito almost cried.

Now the fifty boys hastened forward to put their crabs in the cage. Pepito went last of all, dropping his crab fearfully into the writhing mass. It seemed that he had only dropped a little shell, for the astonished and frightened crab was huddling deep inside. But Pepito knew that it was there, and he was content.

All was ready at last; the signal was given, and the wire cage was lifted by two boys who then stepped swiftly away. But much to the surprise of all, and for a very good reason, the race did not begin! The poor indignant crabs had suffered long at the hands of their masters. Seemingly they considered it the crowning injury to be confined in this crowded enclosure among so many of their angry fellows. For scarcely had the cage been lifted when the crabs, instead of making for the outer circle, began fighting each other in the most animated manner! All their fifty masters urged and implored them, but to no avail! Clawing and clutching at each other, all the crabs went round and round, but not one started towards the outer goal; that is, none but Pepito's crab. This tiny creature, feeling itself once more on solid earth, evidently peeped out, and, thinking that this was no place for him, wriggled from beneath the seething battle, and made off as fast as possible, sidling in little red jerks across the uneven ground. Pepito saw it first, because he was the only one looking for and expecting it.

"Mine! Mine!" he shouted. "Mine is coming!"

Everyone looked in amazement, and there indeed was

the ignominious creature escaping as fast as its tiny crooked legs would permit! By this time, the tangled mass was breaking up and many of the belligerent crabs were scuttling off in different directions. But they were too late. Tired out by all the "training" and "exercise" their masters had given them, and further wearied by the recent struggle, they did not run so rapidly as usual; besides, Pepito's crab had the advantage and was now almost over the white line. . . . Pepito, the boy who was afraid of crabs; the little boy who had cried at the mere mention of the race, he who had not dared to enter a life-sized crab—Pepito was going to win the prize for the great *Carrera de Cangrejos!*

What a shout of both cheers and laughter went up! The other boys raised Pepito to their shoulders and carried him in triumph through the streets! They followed as he led the little squealing black pig home, applauding him all the way.

This only proves once more that "many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first." And indeed, in this world, size and strength by no means assure one of certain victory!

ANITA'S GARDEN

You who have travelled from Bayamón to Comerío, will remember that picturesque ride with a thrill of both delight and fear. Leaving Bayamón the highway winds gently upward among fertile hills and is flanked by fields of sugar cane, fruit groves and pineapple plantations. But this green and sunny country gives you no hint of the very different landscape which is soon to appear, shortly after passing the branch road which leads to Naranjito. Suddenly you find yourself entering a vast gorge in the mountains. The road is now only a perilous ledge, about halfway up an almost perpendicular wall of rock. High over your head hang the towering cliffs; steep and black they drop below. Across the great gulf is a similar mountainside covered with tropical vegetation. Far, far in the bottom, among gigantic boulders, seethes and churns and rushes and roars a foaming yellow torrent, while the sky above is a tranquil expanse of bright, bright blue. On and on through this scene of grandeur, along the narrow road carved out of the living rock, around curve after curve, creeps your car like some tiny unimportant insect crawling over the frowning face of nature. All is quiet save for the faint roar of the river, rising out of the depths. Then a bit further, if there has been a recent rain, you will come upon an imposing spectacle. The river, first widening like a lake, precipitates itself over the rocks and becomes a magnificent waterfall. Closer inspection, however, reveals this wonder to be the work of

man—in fact it is none other than the great Comerío Dam, which furnishes electric power to many of the towns and cities of our Island.

It would seem that in such a rugged, unfertile place human beings could find no home. Yet a strong eye will perceive many a thatched house clinging to the opposite mountain slopes; while by the roadside one passes occasional small dwellings, perched there in the most amazing manner: for do not imagine that they are on the *inner* side of the road, huddled in safety against the cliff. Not at all! They are on the *outer* side, hovering precariously over awesome space! The front of the house, indeed, rests upon the firm rock of the mountain, but the rear is supported on long slender poles, which go down, down until they rest securely upon some projection of the cliff!

From the back windows of many of these abodes, one could drop a stone almost directly into the rushing Comerío river. And in one of this peculiar variety dwelt a pretty little girl of nine years, named Anita. Think what a strange life—to have lived always in a house which was more like an eagle's nest than a dwelling for people! Anita scarcely knew what a yard or garden was. She either played indoors or clambered down over the rocks. She learned to climb almost as easily as the sure-footed mountain goats. She had no brothers or sisters, but she was seldom lonely, for her father kept a small *tienda* in the front part of the house, and to this neighbors from up and down the road were always coming. Many motor vehicles passed every day, and Anita used to stand on the little porch for hours watching them. Now and then one stopped so that its occupants could make purchases from her father's store. Always Anita heard them

admiring the beautiful scenery—wishing they might live where daily they could see so much of nature's splendor. Sometimes the people who stopped spoke in a language she could not understand. This, her father told her, was English. "If you could go to school, you would learn to speak English," he said.

How Anita did wish to go to school! Once only had she been to Comerío. There she had seen the new Horace Mann Towner School, named for the wise and good governor of Porto Rico who lived far away in a wonderful place called San Juan. Anita had never been there. She had never even been to Bayamón, which she had heard was much larger than Comerío. "Oh if I could only go to school!" she yearned. But she could not, as it was much too far. So she helped her mother with the housework and sometimes wondered why people talked so much about the scenery. "Surely the world beyond this valley must be far more splendid," she thought longingly. But she was not unhappy—she really loved the rough beauty of the Comerío gorge, and since she had no brothers or sisters, she especially loved the Echo. For she had long ago learned that if she called out across the valley, an answer would come from the other side. Time and time again she called, whistled and sang to the fascinating Echo, which was her greatest playmate. Her parents told her it was her own voice returning to her; but she preferred to believe her dear old grandmother, who lived with them. *Abuelita* said it was the Spirit of the Hills which called back so sweetly, and this Anita always believed her unseen playmate to be.

Increased travel over the highway, which had been recently connected with the Carretera Central by a road

through Cidra, had brought added trade to the little *tienda,* perched upon the mountainside above the raging river. Anita's father said one evening, "I believe we can afford to hire an automobile from Comerío on our next holiday—the Fourth of July, and we shall all go to visit my brother near Vega Baja. I have not seen him for nearly four years. *Madre mía,*" he turned to *abuelita,* "think, you are going to see José once more!"

How pleased was the grandmother then, and how delighted was Anita when her father said she would for the first time see her cousins Jorge and Irma! At once a letter was dispatched to Vega Baja. An enthusiastic reply was received from their relatives. All they spoke of now in the little house was the proposed trip. Anita's mother made her a pretty new pink dress. It seemed that the day would never come when she was actually going out into the great world beyond the mountains.

When at last the eventful *Cuatro de Julio* arrived, you can imagine the thrills and excitement better than I can describe them. Were I to tell you all that little Ana saw and marvelled at on that memorable trip, it would fill a book.

About noontime they arrived at *tío* José's. What a reception! What joy! What a feast of roast pig and *arroz con pollo* and various other delicious foods! What talking! While her father and mother and grandmother were inside, Anita was outdoors becoming acquainted with her cousins, Jorge and Irma.

"What do you do here? Tell me all, all!" she exclaimed eagerly.

"We go to school," they said, "and play games with other boys and girls, and go to church, and walk about the

plaza in town on Sunday, and work in our garden and go bathing in the ocean——"

"The ocean!" repeated Anita. "Will I ever, ever see it!"

"It is not far from here," they told her. "Perhaps we can drive there before you go home."

"Oh!" cried Anita. Then she looked about her, enchanted by the countless trees and flowers, and the wide level country. She could not remember ever having felt so happy. "And a garden?" she asked. "I have never been in a garden."

Her cousins were much astonished. Never been in a garden! They could not believe it, so they showed her their little garden. In it grew vegetables—beans, eggplant, yams, lettuce, tomatoes, peppers, and flowers and some fruit trees. Anita could not admire it enough. She picked up a handful of the warm, rich earth and let it run through her fingers. "Oh how wonderful it feels," she said. "Oh how I wish I could have a garden!"

"But why don't you have a garden if you want one?" asked her cousin Irma.

"Because there is no place where I live," she replied sadly.

"No *place?*" asked Jorge, much mystified.

Then she explained to them how her house was built. She described the great valley, trying to tell them how different it was from their part of the Island. They were filled with wonder, for they had never been in the mountains. Now they were very anxious to go to Anita's home, and promised her many times that soon they would visit her.

When it came time for Anita to go, she could hardly

bear to leave the lovely garden. It seemed to her that nothing in the world could be more desirable than a sunny patch where one could plant flowers and vegetables and watch them grow. With a feeling of sadness she thought of returning to the barren rocks.

When they were once more in the eagle-nest house, they did nothing for a long time but talk of the delightful day at Vega Baja. It was more lonely in the mountains than ever, because *abuelita* had remained behind for a long visit with her son José. "Why does the Echo always sound so sad now?" wondered Anita, not realizing that it was her own disconsolate voice that made the Echo *triste*.

One taste of flight through the air, and the little fledgeling bird never cares to return again to the nest. One experience of the great world outside, and young folk desire to remain at home no more. Even Anita, child that she was, could never forget her day beyond the mountains. "Oh, if I only had a little garden," she was always thinking. Many times she said it too, which made her poor father and mother very unhappy, for they could see no way of giving her one in a place which even God had not provided with the necessary soil.

However, after considering the problem for a long time, Anita's father decided that they would *make* her a garden. So, from the wood of small boxes in which arrived the meager supplies for his little *tienda,* he contrived to build a large shallow box. When this was finished, the question of where to obtain sufficient soil arose. Finally, by climbing to the top of the cliff, he found a place where he could dig some earth. This he had to let down by means of a rope and bucket, to Anita's

mother who stood in the road far below. It took many bucketfuls to fill the box. Next, they sent to Comerío for some packages of seeds—but flower seeds, only, for there was not space enough for vegetables to grow.

Anita's joy was a pleasure to see. How she watched that box of earth! She watered it so much, it seems strange that it did not all stream away. The day she saw the first green sprout, she cried because she was so happy.

The flowers did not grow very well, possibly because the seeds were poor, or more probably because the sun shone there only a short part of the day. But a few blossoms appeared, and Anita showed her cousins her "garden" with considerable pride when they came with their parents on a return visit. Secretly, they were much surprised, and thought it a very poor kind of a garden indeed, but they were too polite to say so. They pretended to admire it, but soon they turned away to look and feast their eyes on what was, to them, infinitely more wonderful—the mountain scenery. Poor Anita was greatly disappointed. Her cousins were like all the other people who passed by—thinking of nothing but the scenery, which to her mind, was only good to look at after all and not useful in any way. On the other hand, there was her precious garden, secured by so much labor and grown with so much loving care—and her cousins scarcely looked at it. All they wished to do was to climb over what she thought just stupid rocks. "They really climb very awkwardly," said Anita to herself, for she was a wee bit angry. But we are glad to assure you that she also was much too polite to say such a thing aloud.

When the visitors had departed, the whole valley

seemed dark and bleak and still. Looking sorrowfully at the poor excuse of a garden, Anita felt that she could no longer be contented with life there on the mountainside.

Little did she know what a wondrous surprise was coming to her on the morrow. For then a man arrived who told her father that within a fortnight a *guagua* would run past their house daily, for the special purpose of carrying the mountain children to school in Comerío!

Anita will never, never forget her first day of school so long as she lives. She could hardly wait to return to her mother and father to tell them what to her was the most wonderful among *all* things in a day of nothing but wonders!

"Oh mamma! Papa!" she cried, jumping down from the bus and fairly flying into the house. "What do you think? You never could imagine! Never! Never! So I must tell you! In that school, where *everything* is perfect, we are to have gardens! Yes, gardens! Each of us is to have a piece of real, real earth in which to learn to plant things, and care for them and watch them grow!"

Near evening she looked from the window. The whole valley was swept with the last rays of the tropical sun. It seemed filled with golden mist. The rushing yellow river was turned to a stream of shining gold. How Anita loved it all! Beautiful, beautiful home, she thought! Wherever it may be—in the mountains, or on the plains, there is no place like it in the whole wide world! And Anita, filled with contentment, bursting with happiness, sang forth a joyous song which flew on invisible wings across the vast valley and was caught somewhere, far on the other side, and wafted sweetly back by her faithful playmate, the Echo.

THE OXCART AND THE AUTOMOBILE

On an obscure side road in Porto Rico lived two men who had been friends for years and years. One was called Don Gabriel, the other Don Manuel. Each owned a small farm and grew sugar cane. They were both nearly seventy years old and had never travelled very far nor had much contact with the outside world. Consequently, they used old-fashioned methods in farming. Each possessed two yokes of oxen and a substantial oxcart in which their cane was transported to a distant mill for grinding. Both were fond of their faithful oxen, and when their respective carts started for the sugar mill, they used to make small wagers as to which would return first. For a long time they had enjoyed the friendly little jokes in which they frequently indulged over their yokes of "racing" oxen.

Each of these old men had one son who was the pride of his life. Though their possessions were not large, they had managed to economize in many ways so that they could send their boys to school in the United States. Finally, the two students returned to the island, bringing with them many modern ideas, which were destined to astound their fathers. The first problem they attacked was that of the oxcarts.

"Father," said Miguel to Don Manuel, "if a farmer in the States should see this old-fashioned cart and this clumsy ox team, I believe he would die laughing. We must be up-to-date and buy a motor truck."

"Oh," shuddered Don Manuel, "the dreadful noisy things! I never want to have one on the place! Besides, imagine how ridiculous an automobile would look on this narrow, rutted road which is little better than a path, and difficult even for the patient oxen. No; I shall never consider such a thing."

"Come, father," laughed the son, "that is easy to overcome. Let us buy the truck. When the other cane-growers on this road see how quickly your product goes to the mill, they too will want trucks. Then they will petition the Government for a better road, and before you know it, a splendid highway will run right past your door, like a wide silk ribbon unwinding itself! Hundreds of cars will pass every day, and our land will be many times more valuable than it is now. That is *progress*, father!"

Again Don Manuel shuddered. He was very conservative and clung to the old ways of doing things. And furthermore, as he told Miguel, who was in despair at such antiquated ideas, he had no wish either to see or hear hundreds of the terrifying automobiles speed past his door.

A similar discussion was taking place on the *finca* of Don Gabriel.

"Father!" exclaimed young Alfredo, his son, "this terrible oxcart of yours creeps like a snail! It takes a man a whole day to deliver one load of cane to the mill! An automobile could do in it two hours. A truck could make three or even four trips a day to the oxcart's one. Think of the great saving of time and wages! That is efficiency! Everyone must be efficient in these days or he is a failure. 'Time saved is money earned'!"

Don Gabriel listened in bewilderment to the arguments

of his son. He too shrank with dismay at the thought of giving up the old order of life. Like his friend, he did not want one of those sputtering, powerful trucks either.

"Ah, but Alfredo," he said with dignity, "life is not all a matter of turning time into dollars. It should be lived in a more leisurely fashion than you picture it: we should have time to study, to enjoy the beauty around us, to proceed peacefully with our allotted tasks, to philosophize."

Alfredo cried out impatiently: "Yes, 'to philosophize' while your neighbor is getting away with all the profits."

"*My* neighbor will never do that!" retorted the old man, with an air of conviction.

"Well, I wasn't referring to Miguel's father! Don Manuel is as old-fashioned and behind the times as you! I'm speaking of a general neighbor—anyone, everyone! Do you suppose that in the great sugar mills at Guánica they have time to wait for cane to be hauled in by oxen? I should say not! They use trains and trucks. Efficiency! Father, you will have to come to it, as all Porto Rico around you has done. If you don't keep up with the times, you will lose out altogether."

These discussions continued on the two farms until at last Don Manuel gave in, and Miguel drove home triumphantly one day in an enormous new motor truck. He thundered past the house of Don Gabriel, who could not believe his own eyes.

With what a sheepish look Don Manuel met his old friend the next day! But when he ventured feebly to utter the word "efficiency," Don Gabriel threw up his hands and made off as fast as possible, calling back over his shoulder: "You also! Oh, my friend, I cannot bear

more! All day long I hear nothing but that hateful word, and now *you* too! *Dios mío,* it is terrible!"

So the old friendship became sadly strained. Progress and Efficiency had almost severed it!

On the first trip made by the new truck, the nervous driver allowed it to skid off the narrow road into a shallow ditch, spilling a large part of the load of cane. The "I told you so!" of Don Gabriel was full of triumph when he heard of the mishap. "Where are the days of the 'racing oxen'?" he added with sadness in his voice, for he was lonely for the peaceful comradeship of his old friend. But Don Manuel was much too busy to philosophize these days. Having yielded on the question of the truck, he realized that he could no longer withstand his energetic son, who was now devising all kinds of modern improvements for the farm, and had induced his father to assist him in carrying out his busy plans. He even had drawn up a petition for the other landowners along the obscure road, to sign, so that they could get a new road which would connect at both ends with the main highways. Many of them, won over by his enthusiasm and convincing arguments, had already signed.

"Never!!" exclaimed Don Gabriel, vehemently, when young Miguel came to him for his signature.

"Oh, father!" insisted his son Alfredo in despair, "if you don't listen to reason, how can you ever hope to have any efficiency or——"

But at the sound of that much-despised word, the old man stamped out of the room. The two young friends looked at each other helplessly.

"I know exactly how it is," sympathized Miguel. "I had just such a time with my father. But now that I

have won him over, he is satisfied that modern ways are best."

"Oh, Miguel," mourned Alfredo, "I don't believe I'll ever be able to do anything with my father. He's as stubborn and unyielding as his own beloved oxen! This farm will soon be the disgrace and laughing-stock of the whole countryside!"

The oxcart carrying Don Gabriel's cane to the distant mill.

One day old Don Gabriel decided he would go to the mill with his cartload of cane. By a coincidence, Don Manuel had decided that on that day he would take his first trip on the new truck. Oxcart and truck left their farms at about the same time, but of course the truck was soon out of sight. However, about two hours later, the slow-moving oxcart came in sight of the truck where it was stuck fast in a large mud-hole.

"Can we assist you in any way?" asked Don Gabriel with the most extreme politeness.

"No; thank you," replied Don Manuel with equal courtesy. "My man is looking for a board to put under the wheel. We will soon be out of this, and will shortly pass you on the way. Adios, and thanks again."

"Adios," said Don Gabriel, and the two old men parted, with secretly aching hearts.

Several hours later, the oxcart arrived at the mill. The great truck had not passed it. And Don Gabriel recalled that world-famous fable of the race between the hare and the tortoise, which has been read by every school girl and boy for many generations.

Late in the afternoon the oxcart, lumbering homeward, came upon the truck still in the mud-hole. The remainder of the heavy load of cane had all been removed, but to no avail.

"We have a rope," said Don Manuel wearily. "We shall be very thankful if you will aid us."

"With pleasure!" exclaimed Don Gabriel. "But can it be possible that your new and invulnerable truck needs help?"

With the combined strength of the patient beasts and its own powerful motor, the truck finally emerged from the deep mud-hole.

The victory for that day was Don Gabriel's and you may be sure he enjoyed it to the utmost.

"If we had a new road, such a thing could never happen," reproached Don Manuel.

"True;" admitted Don Gabriel, "but oxen can go on any road, so why waste good money building them a better one?"

A week or so later, when young Alfredo and his father were in the fields inspecting the workmen, Alfredo

suffered a very severe injury. He was accidentally struck by a laborer's *machete*. With difficulty they carried him across the cane field to the house. It seemed that he must die. Don Gabriel was desperate. The horses were off on errands. The slow oxen were of no use. How to get Alfredo to the nearest hospital?

Miguel and Don Manuel, informed of the accident, hastened to offer their assistance. "We must take him in the truck," said Miguel. "It is the only way!"

The stricken father agreed. Hastily they swung a hammock in the empty truck, so that the wounded young man would not receive the jolts from the uneven road. He was rushed to the Municipal Hospital.

"You arrived just in time," the doctor said later. "A few minutes more and I could have done nothing. Bringing him in that motor truck saved his life."

Needless to say the farm of Don Gabriel soon possessed as fine a truck as the *finca* of Don Manuel. And not long afterwards a beautiful new road was indeed unwinding itself like a roll of silk ribbon past the two farms, as Miguel had prophesied.

The two old friends now have the same time to read and think, to visit together and philosophize, as they always had before Alfredo and Miguel came home, revolutionizing their peaceful lives by the introduction of modern methods and efficiency. For the active management of their properties has been definitely relinquished by them to their ambitious and energetic sons. They realize that no one can withstand the march of progress very long. And certainly Alfredo and Miguel have managed to give to the plantations an air of prosperity which they never possessed in the old easy-going days.

It would be hard to find prouder fathers than Don Manuel and Don Gabriel. But nevertheless, they feel with regret that their "efficient" sons have missed something. These two active young men will never really know, as their fathers did, that blessed leisure in which to dream and philosophize, for such tranquillity has gone with the passing of the lumbering, picturesque old oxcarts, which are scarcely ever seen nowadays upon the splendid highways of Porto Rico. However, it is mankind's bright hope that the present avalanche of progress is but leading to a new philosophy of broader scope than was ever evolved through the more limited knowledge of men in days gone by.

THE SUNDIAL ON LA FORTALEZA
(SAN JUAN, PORTO RICO)

Up ancient winding stairs, themselves which tell
Strange Spanish tales of days of yore, I gain
The tower-roof where stands a sentinel.
Four-faced, topped by a spinning weather vane,
A sundial gray it is, of odd design,
Which through long centuries has held its place
Above the hill-set harbor, where in line
Uncounted ships have passed and left no trace.
From time the first shafts of Borinquen's sun
Strike on its eastern face, until the tower
Is lost in twilight's gloom and day is done,
Men mounting to its heights may tell the hour.
And oft a destined hour it has told
In silence there upon the fortress old.

THE STREET VENDERS

Pablo was a very strong and active boy. He spent all his spare time playing baseball and basket ball. Consequently he was continually falling and hurting himself. But he had never received worse injuries than cuts and bruises until, one day while making a "home-run," he fell and broke his leg! "I could hear the bone crack!" he related proudly after the pain was somewhat lessened.

At first Pablo thought his accident rather wonderful, because during this time he was a kind of hero. True, he was uncomfortable because he could not move about, but nevertheless he very much admired the cast in which the doctors had encased his leg so that it would "knit" properly. The other boys also admired it when they came to visit him, and were allowed to peep under the sheet to see it. His father brought him books and games with which he could amuse himself while lying in bed. His mother ordered the cook to prepare whatever foods he liked best to eat, and his friends took candies and fruits to him. "A broken leg is the best kind of sickness," he told them, "because it does not affect the stomach."

But soon the boys came less often, for they were busy playing baseball after school hours. Pablo grew weary of games and books. He did not even feel hungry! "Oh, mamma," he exclaimed one evening, "I am so tired of this bed! All day long I lie here alone. I can't see nor hear anything!"

His mother replied: "I believe we can arrange that."

Early the following morning she had a little bed prepared in the front *sala*. There, she and the servants moved Pablo from his own room far at the rear of the big house, by carrying him on the mattress. When he was comfortably settled in the new location, his mother said: "Now I must go into San Juan. You will be alone, but I want you to listen carefully, so that when I return you can tell me all that you have heard. You are going to discover that there are many things for people to *hear,* who are not able to *see.*"

Without any further explanation, she went away. Pablo, who was very curious, lay there, flat on his back, listening. He could not imagine what his mother had meant. However, he had not long to wait.

A voice entered the quiet street—a voice singing unintelligible words in the loudest, queerest tune imaginable! Only five different notes were in that song, but the singer repeated them over and over and over. Pablo strained his ears to listen, and finally he recognized the words which were none other than, *"Huevos frescos! Huevos frescos! Huevos frescos hoy!"* But our story is not in Spanish, so we must say, as though the voice sang in English, "Fresh eggs! Fresh eggs! Fresh eggs today!"

While this musical vender was passing directly in front of the house, the delighted Pablo discovered that a second voice had entered the street and was singing in concert—or perhaps we should say in *discord.* At first he could not understand the new words, for the egg man was too vociferous. But evidently some one came out to buy, for he suddenly stopped.

"Pollos, pollos y gallinas, y un pavo grande!" went

the new song. "Pullets, pullets and hens, and one large turkey!" In English, you know, a pullet is, as a *pollo* in Spanish, a young and tender chicken.

And now the venders began to come thick and fast, so Pablo had difficulty in distinguishing individual calls.

"Oranges! Oranges!" came in a thin shaky voice, as though it were that of an old man. "Ripe oranges and grapefruit."

"Piñas! Piñas!" screamed another, as if to tell the buyers that pineapples were far better to purchase than *chinas* and *toronjas.*

"Fresas frescas!" shouted a third competitor in the battle of the fruits. We do not have a word in English for *fresas,* but similar berries are our "red raspberries" and the delicious "strawberries."

"Guanábanas, nísperos y guayabas!" sang a fourth vender, naming three well-known tropical fruits which he had for sale.

And now came the vegetable men. Pablo thought there must be a hundred of them, though later he discovered that only about ten passed each morning. What a great variety of edibles these busy men brought directly to the doors of people's houses, thus making it unnecessary for them to go to the market! When Pablo did not hear the rattling wheels of a push-cart crunching along the gravel street, he knew that the peddler must be carrying his wares in a large basket on his head.

Yautías—white and yellow, fresh lettuce, cabbage, *gandules,* eggplant, potatoes, ñames, batatas (sweet potatoes), American tomatoes, *plátanos*—yellow and green; bananas—large, medium and small; *chayotes,* beans of all kinds, were a few of the many products which could

be had in a moment, merely by a signal from window, balcony or doorway. But each man had a different combination of words called in his own strange manner or sung to a different tune. On paper we could never reproduce them. Most of the *idioms* cannot even be translated. But if you would like to hear these cries and songs, you must get in touch with Pablo, for he learned them all by heart during his few weeks at home. (Now that he is well again, his friends would almost rather that he entertain them with his *repertorio de cantos* of the street venders, than that he assume his old position as catcher on the baseball nine!) But we must return to that first day and the other things that Pablo heard.

One especially enjoyable feature was the heated competition among the fish men.

"*Hay pescado*—here are fish! Good, *cheap* fish today!" resounded the deep tones of a man "who must be six feet tall!" thought Pablo.

Undaunted by this, there came in a shrill tenor: "Fisherman! Fisherman! Here goes the fisherman! Good, *fresh* fish today!"

"I have fish, I have fish, I have fish . . . " went another very monotonous cry.

How odd that they should all be in the same street at once. How fierce sounded the rivalry! Pablo shivered, half-afraid and half-hoping that a fight would begin. But it did not. In fact he soon learned that this simultaneous appearance was a daily event. He tried to imagine why they all came at the same time. What a poor way to do business! Finally he decided that since probably none of them cared to come second or last, they all came first!

"Brillo!" screamed a strident voice, belonging evidently to a tiny boy. "Shine! Shine! Shoe-shine!" was what he would have been saying in English.

"Rosas y azucenas!"—"Roses and tuberoses!" called a man who, the maid told Pablo, had only one arm, and so was obliged to sell flowers for a living. Pablo felt so sorry for him that he gave the maid his only ten cents to buy some roses.

But he regretted somewhat that he had spent his money for flowers, when the very next vender came shouting that magic word, *"chicharrones!"* In English, these are called "cracklings," and are, as we all know, the delicious crisp fat of the roast pig.

"Hamacas!" sang a newcomer, "Hammocks, comfortable and strong! Baskets, hats, and all kinds of straw work!"

Another man was selling canes, and then came one who announced that he had *"aguacates*—the first of the season!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Pablo, "how I should like to buy one for mother, she is so fond of them. But I shall give her the roses," he consoled himself.

Next passed a man who had all varieties of *tela*—dress materials, laces, threads and buttons—everything that a seamstress could possibly need. These men, we sometimes say, are "walking dry-goods stores."

"Crispet! Crispet!" came a staccato cry. "Pop-corn! Pop-corn!" Pablo remembered this little fellow. How often he had bought the crisp, sugary balls of pop-corn from him.

Pablo was not so interested in the next vender, who had Porto Rican pottery for sale, as he was in the follow-

Two venders selling hats, baskets and hammocks.

ing who offered *dulces*—candies and sweetcakes. But when a bit later he heard, "ice cream and ices," he so longed for something cold, that he had to ask for a glass of water, which he justly considered a very poor substitute for the delicate pink *helado!* And the "tinkle, tinkle," of the *barquilla* seller's triangle, only served to make him hungrier.

So proceeded the long succession of peddlers selling a strange mixture of vegetables, fowls, fruits, fish, eggs, baskets, pop-corn, canes, cakes, "shoe-shines," dress materials, *aguacates,* laces, *chicharrones,* ice cream, pottery, roses, hammocks—almost everything one could imagine.

At last arrived the boys calling the noon editions of the various newspapers, and Pablo knew then that it was time for his mother to return from San Juan. When she came in and heard his excited account, she was more than pleased that he had so enjoyed his new diversion.

"Tomorrow," he told his mother, "I shall take paper and write down everything they say. Then I shall memorize it all, and also the queer tunes they sing! Oh, mamma, what a land is our Porto Rico where nearly all the products of the country are brought directly to one's door in the course of a single day! I am surely anxious to make the acquaintance of all my new friends—*los revendones.*"

Pablo felt he could scarcely wait until morning. But finally he began to fall asleep. And then, just as he had almost entered the land of dreams, he heard a small, wistful voice passing down the street in the darkness. *"Maní, maní, maní tostado!"* came the plaintive cry of the last vender—probably some tired and hungry little boy. Pablo wished he had a package of the nice roasted peanuts . . .

"Maní, maní, maní tostado,
Ni está crudo ni está quemado,
Y yo lo vendo garantizado.
Un paquete de maní un centavo.
Maní, maní, llevo maní!"

"Please buy me some peanuts," said Pablo. But he really did not say it at all—he only *thought* that he did, for he was already asleep, and dreaming.

It seemed to him that he was a vender who carried on his head a large basket filled with oranges, on top of which rested a huge turkey. . . . Then suddenly it was not Pablo at all, but a monstrous giant, who upheld a nest of golden eggs surmounted by a beautiful Bird of Paradise. . . . Or was it old Atlas himself who, as he had learned, supports the world on his mighty shoulders?

And so it occurs to us that this old Atlas is perhaps the greatest peddler of them all—rushing on and on through endless space, carrying with him our little Globe, willing to trade it with *any* distant star for the most fabulous price in all the Universe—*the opportunity to live a Perfect Dream.*

FERNANDO AND THE PIG

Fernando was a very greedy boy who thought of food more than of anything else. He was always the first one to appear at meal time. In the streets, he seemed to be constantly eating; and whenever he had a penny, he spent it for candy, *chicharrones* or cakes. Going to a pig-roast was his favorite pastime. But he never would help with any of the preparations, and simply went for the purpose of eating everything he could get. He believed that if he had the opportunity, he could eat a whole roast pig! So it will not be surprising to learn that he was the fattest boy in Naranjal. Sometimes, in derision, other boys called him Fernand*illo!* This always irritated him very much, but he was too lazy to take any revenge on them.

On his birthday, Fernando received a present. His uncle, who was a stock-farmer, owned several large pigs. One of these had some little pigs, and amongst them there was an exceptionally tiny one. In fact it was so lean and small that the uncle realized it to be one of those pigs which *never* grow, no matter how much you feed them. So he gave it to Fernando for a pet.

But Fernando was not happy with his gift, for he was so selfish that he did not care for any kind of pets. He was only interested in pigs because they are good to eat when large and fat. So he dragged the squealing animal across the yard and thrust it into a pen back of his house.

While he was doing this, a boy was watching him through the fence. This boy was almost as small and thin as the pig itself. "What a nice little pig, Fernando," he said timidly. "Where did you get him?"

"I do not think he is nice at all, the miserable thing!" answered Fernando crossly. "Who wants a pig for a *pet?* Pigs are of no use except to eat!"

"I wish I had a little pig like that for a pet," said the poor boy wistfully. "I would teach it to perform tricks and to follow me all about as if it were a dog."

"Ho! Ho!" laughed Fernando scornfully, "you would have a hard time teaching anything to a dumb pig like this one! What it ought to learn is to eat and grow fat, so it could be roasted."

"Oh, Fernando! You would not roast your *pet,* would you?" asked Pepe in dismay. Already he loved the tiny animal, because he felt so sorry for it.

"Wouldn't I!" scoffed Fernando. "Just *watch* me when he gets big and fat!" He looked at the weak young thing greedily, as though he already could see it turning round and round on a spit over a slow fire.

"What are you going to name it, Fernando?" inquired Pepe sadly.

"Gómez!" shouted Fernando with sudden inspiration. The poor boy looked at him wonderingly, for this name suggested Mr. Gómez, the fattest man in Naranjal. "If I call him Gómez," said Fernando laughing loudly, "I hope he will soon grow big and fat like his namesake!" for he too was thinking of Mr. Gómez.

"You ought to call him Fernandillo Gómez," murmured Pepe to himself.

"What? What's that?" cried Fernando angrily. "Oh!

I heard what you said. You go on home, Pepe, and don't let me see you coming near my pig!" Then Fernando went into the house to find something for Gómez to eat, for he was determined that the meagre animal should begin to grow immediately.

When he had gone, Pepe returned to the fence. "Gómez, Gómez," he called softly. The pig, which was trotting around the pen, seeking a way to escape, heard the kind voice. Probably it knew that here was a friend, for it grunted weakly. "Oh how I wish you were mine!" exclaimed Pepe. "I would not be thinking of eating you. And what good friends we could be!"

Fernando spent a great deal of time feeding Gómez. It was remarkable how much food the little fellow consumed; but no fat appeared on its small bones. It loved Fernando, as any animal loves the person who feeds it. But Fernando was so disgusted that he felt no affection whatever for the pig.

"How is Gómez?" asked Pepe one day, peering through the fence.

Fernando had no wish to admit his failure, so he smiled and said: "Oh, Gómez is all right. He is getting to be a fine fat pig!"

"Ha! Ha!" laughed Pepe. "I do not think poor little Gómez looks any larger."

"You stop laughing!" commanded Fernando sternly. "What do *you* know about pigs? I don't believe you have ever even tasted any. You do not realize that this is a very *special* kind of pig. It is meant to be eaten by *one* person alone. There, I guess you didn't know that!" he finished proudly. The truth was, Fernando had not known it either. It was an idea that had occurred to him

while he was talking. It was more than an idea—it was an inspiration! The very thing he had always wanted to do, was to have a pig-roast *all by himself,* so that he could consume an entire pig without having to share it with anyone! Gómez was just the pig for that! Fernando went into the house to ask his mother if he might do it.

Poor Pepe! Fernando had spoken the truth. He had never tasted roast pig. But that did not make him desire to eat Gómez. He could not understand how Fernando could be so greedy and so cruel.

Now Fernando fed Gómez more than ever, because his indulgent mother had promised him he could have his solitary pig-roast. He told Pepe how much he loved Gómez; but Pepe knew that that was only because he wanted to eat the pig. Looking about the kitchen for something to feed Gómez, he espied a large pan of milk on the table. "It is rather queer, dirty-looking milk," he thought. "Perhaps it is sour. Anyway it is good enough for Gómez. Stupid creature! Why does he not grow faster?" Then, as he was such a naughty boy, he carried the milk away without asking anyone if he might have it. "Just imagine how good he will taste, all crisp and brown," he said to Pepe, as Gómez feebly lapped the milk. "Dear little Gómez!" he exclaimed.

"Surely such a wicked boy will be punished," thought Pepe, as he stood watching Gómez after Fernando had gone away. Suddenly he jumped in alarm. What was happening to the pitiful little creature? It was writhing in agony on the ground.

Alas, that Fernando had taken the "milk" without permission, for it was not milk at all! One of the servants had been washing some roots of the *marangucy* plant,

preparatory to making starch. Although after it has been thoroughly washed, the root itself is harmless, the cloudy water that remains is very poisonous. Fernando in his selfish haste had mistaken this deadly liquid for milk! Poor little Gómez! How he was suffering now! The terrible acid which is contained in the *maranguey* plant, was burning inside him like fire.

"Fernando! Fernando!" screamed Pepe in great consternation. "Come! Come! Gómez is dying!" He climbed quickly over the fence.

Fernando came running as fast as he could—which was not very fast. "What is it?" he panted.

Just as he reached the pen, Gómez turned over on his back, stiffened, and with his four short legs pointing pathetically into the air, he died. Pepe looked grief-stricken. But Fernando immediately set up a terrible cry—not in sorrow over his poor dead pig, but in rage that he was cheated of his anticipated *lechón asado*. So was his awful greediness repaid! He ran into the house, weeping and howling, and would not stop until his mother had given him a whole plateful of cakes.

When Pepe saw that Fernando had no further use for Gómez, now that he was dead, he lifted him up and carried him away. He made a little grave for the tiny creature he had loved, and buried it tenderly. Beautiful blossoms from the flamboyant tree which stood in his dooryard, drifted down on the grave of Gómez.

Because he ate *all* the cakes so hurriedly while he was crying, Fernando became quite ill, and this seemed a further punishment for his greediness.

Later on, when his uncle came to Naranjal and asked about the pet, Fernando had to tell him it was dead.

"But it was such a healthy pig, even though it was small," said the uncle thoughtfully, "that I do not see why it should die so soon."

"It ate too much, the greedy thing!" answered Fernando, crossly.

"Oh, I see!" remarked the wise uncle, who was beginning to understand what a very selfish boy his fat nephew really was. "And where did you bury the poor little animal?"

"I didn't bury it. That boy did," Fernando admitted, reluctantly, pointing towards Pepe.

The uncle went down the garden to the fence, beyond which was the lowly dwelling of poor Pepe. "Where did you bury the pig, little boy?" asked the uncle.

Pepe showed him the tiny mound, strewn with the lovely blossoms. Tears came into his eyes. "Why are you crying?" asked Fernando's uncle curiously.

"Because I have never had a pet, and I loved little Gómez," sobbed Pepe.

Then the good uncle gave the astonished boy a bright twenty-five-cent piece as an appreciative reward for his kindness and love for the poor little animal, and promised to send him a pet pig as soon as he returned to his farm.

"QUESO DEL PAIS"

(*Native Cheese*)

La Preferida, a little store and café located on the Military Road, is the scene of our story. It was a one-roomed wooden building, painted blue, and supported in the rear by slender poles reaching down into the valley. Inside, where it was very neat, were two or three tables covered with white oil-cloth. Around these stood several chairs, to accommodate customers who came there to eat, and take *refrescos*. Upon some shelves was a limited stock of canned goods. A glass case on the counter contained various kinds of sweets, including *pasta de guayaba* and *dulce de naranja*. An icebox stood in one corner. In it were bottles of fruit juice and supplies of the product for which La Preferida was most patronized. This was, as one could read on a sign hanging outside above the door, "Queso del País."

La Preferida was owned and run by a small, quiet man known as Roberto. He was well liked and respected because of his modesty, his friendliness, and his extreme honesty in business. Since his wares were always excellent in quality, and scrupulously clean, his store was a very popular resort. Many men declared that there was no *queso de hoja* in the whole island equal to that sold by Roberto. One man who had been to Isabela, which is a town in northwest Porto Rico, famous for its cheese, said that not even there had he tasted any finer.

Roberto's cheese was always cold, fresh and deliciously sweet. In every cake the hundreds of flaky leaves, turned so carefully one on top of the other, were as thin as paper and of feather-lightness. A bit of that wonderful *queso de hoja* between two crisp morsels of soda-cracker, and taken with a little fresh *dulce de naranja* would indeed have been a delight for the gods! And best of all, Roberto was reasonable and consistent in his prices. His round cheese patties were each of the same size, and sold for the fixed sum of ten cents.

But while the popularity of Roberto's store was due in part to him, credit for the delectable cheese itself must be given to another person—Gertrudis, his good wife. It was she who took care of their little herd of cows; and it was she who knew the secret of making the best *queso* in the country. Other women tried in vain to produce such cheese. Gertrudis had had the recipe from her mother, who, in turn, had learned it from her grandmother. How did she manage to separate the curds from the whey, keeping all of the rich cream in them? Then in what manner did she ever contrive to bring the leaves of the cheese to such an appetizing thinness? And why did she alone seem to know just how long to cure the cheese so that it reached the perfection of sweetness and flavor for which it was so famous? These were some of the questions the other women asked one another. Gertrudis was indeed a genius. She also had a knack of making those melting, ambrosial *dulces,* which added so much to the delicacy of the *quesos.*

Thus the partnership of Roberto and Gertrudis prospered until one day—

One very, very warm day, a great man, high in the

affairs of government, whose face and name were familiar to the entire population of the island, was passing along the Military Road in his powerful automobile, on his way to Ponce. He was not only a great man, but a large man as well. And, as we have said, the day was very hot. The official was suffering from the heat. La Preferida, protected from the burning sun by two giant mango trees, made a cool and inviting picture. The distinguished man noticed the sign "Queso del País." He hardly thought he would care for the cheese sold in such an insignificant store. But perhaps he could get a drink of cold water. He ordered his chauffeur to drive into the shade and stop.

Roberto came out, much impressed by the beauty of the costly motor car which had paused before his humble *tienda*. But you can imagine his astonishment and confusion when almost immediately he recognized the man within. He made a deep bow, and managed to ask what was wanted. He was told to bring a glass of water.

While he was doing this the official, who was really so prominent that he was cordially known by every one as "Don Juan," was peering into the little store. He could see that it was spotlessly clean. Perhaps, after all, the cheese might be fairly good. When Roberto returned he said, "I believe I will try some cheese also. What kinds do you have?" Several people had now gathered, attracted by the fine car. They too had recognized Don Juan, and were staring at him with awe and admiration.

"*Queso de hoja*, Señor Don Juan," answered Roberto respectfully. "Also I have *dulces de batata* and *de naranja*."

"Fine," said Don Juan. "Please bring me some cheese and crackers and *dulce de naranja.*"

The people congregated about the automobile were watching what took place with the utmost interest. Every eye followed the first bite of cheese and *dulce* into Don Juan's mouth, and likewise observed the ecstatic expression which crept over his face as he actually tasted the cool, rich cheese which they all knew and liked so well. Now there was nothing which Don Juan relished more than native cheese, when it was well made. And to his amazement, this was the very best he had ever eaten! He consumed what he had and ordered more. Then he told Roberto that he had never had such celestial cheese before, and that certainly he would stop for some every time he passed La Preferida. Roberto, overcome with pride and joy at this, was glad that all the bystanders could hear it. They were glad too, because they liked their friend Roberto. Then Don Juan wanted to pay. Roberto protested that he could not take any money; he said he felt that it was a privilege to have such an eminent man eat some of his poor cheese. Don Juan insisted. What could Roberto do? In the end, he had to accept.

"How much?" asked Don Juan.

"Ten cents, each," answered Roberto very much embarrassed.

"What? Only ten cents? Why that splendid cheese should cost much more! Here is fifty cents."

Roberto tried to give him the change but he would not take it, declaring that the cheese was easily worth twenty-five cents a cake. The friends of Roberto lis-

tened to this dialogue somewhat nervously. They hoped it would not cause Roberto to raise the price. For if he did, they would not enjoy nearly so many treats of the excellent cheese as they formerly had since they were all very poor.

Now saying "¡*Adios amigos*!" to the entire gathering, Don Juan ordered his chauffeur to drive on.

No sooner had he departed than everyone began to talk admiringly about him and to exclaim over his visit. Roberto was quite elated that his little *tienda* had been honored by the patronage of such a prominent man. He could scarcely wait to go home and tell Gertrudis of their good luck. How sincerely happy they were that night. So all might have gone on very well had Don Juan not returned, and had he not told several of his friends about the marvellous *queso del país* to be had in the obscure café on the *Carretera Central*.

For thereafter, from time to time, automobiles drew up at La Preferida, and the rich occupants asked Roberto for *queso de hoja*. Don Juan stopped when he chanced to be passing. At first Roberto was excited and charmed with these visitors, but as the novelty wore off, he saw them more and more as a business proposition. He did not hesitate now to charge twenty-five cents a cake for his cheese. These people had the money, were willing to pay, and did not deem the price exorbitant. "It is not too high," thought Roberto, and considered making it a general price to all of his customers. "The cheese is *worth* twenty-five cents. Why should they not pay it?" he reasoned, forgetting that they could not afford such an amount. Several of the visitors became accustomed to summon him by name. Even Don Juan called him

"Roberto." This familiarity was too much for the modest fellow. He became so filled with false pride, that he soon began boasting of his intimate friendship with the famous man. He talked so much about the visits of this powerful official to his store, that his old customers grew weary of hearing him and became very disgusted. Where was the quiet, genial, modest Roberto of other days? Surely this self-important, boasting fellow was not he! But the final blow came when Roberto definitely changed the price of his cheese from ten to twenty-five cents. And I can even charge the rich visitors forty or fifty cents," he thought. Not only was Roberto's foolish head turned, but he was becoming exceedingly greedy as well.

"But Roberto," pleaded one of his friends, "you should not raise the price. You have always made a good profit by selling your cheese at ten cents. You know that we cannot afford to pay twenty-five cents. And after all, you must remember that we mountain people are your most steady customers, and the ones who furnish you your real income. There is only a chance that the rich people may pass and stop to buy, and you cannot afford to run your business on chances. If you lose our trade, you will lose your profits. And, I repeat, we certainly cannot pay so much as twenty-five cents."

"I shall run my business as I see fit," answered Roberto angrily, unwilling to listen to this reasonable advice. "And, besides," he added stubbornly, "the cheese is *worth* twenty-five cents. My *friend* Don Juan has said so."

"It may be *worth* it," replied the other, "but try and get the money. You will see. No one will buy; your fine cheese will spoil, and you will lose in the end."

Roberto, however, had already lost his common sense and would pay no heed. Poor Gertrudis, laboring at home, taking care of the cows and making *dulces* and cheese, knew nothing of all this.

Roberto very quickly discovered that his business was no better after he had raised the price. In fact, it was as the man had said—he began to lose money. But he felt that the people would only laugh at him if he changed his mind now. So instead, he boasted more than ever, trying to impress them with his importance. His friends disliked to come to La Preferida any more, recalling what a pleasant meeting-place it had been before Roberto had changed so much. They wondered what they could do to bring him to his senses.

One day, they heard that in the following week there was to be a big celebration in Ponce. This meant that many officials from San Juan would be passing over the Military Road, among them possibly some of Roberto's "friends." Don Juan would surely be coming, because he was to make the principal address of the occasion. Roberto did not hesitate to speak of it. Rubbing his hands together he remarked pompously: "Well, Don Juan will be going by on next Thursday. Of course he will want some *queso*. But I shall be ready for him, never fear. My wife shall outdo herself. She shall make quantities of cheese so that I may select from the *finest* to sell to the fastidious Don Juan. The rest I shall keep to sell to you, who do not have the delicate taste of a superior man like Don Juan. I shall make great profits on that day. You will see if I can get twenty-five cents for my cheese, or not!"

The listeners were so weary at this kind of idle talk

that many of them went out of the store. "What can we do to show Roberto how foolish he is and restore our old friend to his senses?" asked one impatiently. So they began to plot among themselves.

Finally the morning of the day of celebration arrived. Roberto arose at daybreak. Poor Gertrudis was up also, but she was very tired because she had worked all week to make dulces and cheese. It was a difficult process by which the wonderful *queso de hoja* was made —and Roberto had insisted that this be the best she had ever turned out. "It is to feed an illustrious gentleman," he had encouraged her.

Roberto dressed carefully in his best clothes, and then began to select the finest of the cheeses. "Of course Don Juan will drive past late—because great people usually are late," he told his wife "but it will pay me to go early—since *this* time *he* may be early. One cannot figure on it too closely. A *successful* man will always be found at his post!" And he walked about with a self-satisfied air. Humble old Gertrudis regarded her husband with wide-open eyes. She had never heard him use such conceited language before—he who had always been so unpretentious.

After Roberto had opened the café for the day, he stood in the doorway shading his eyes with his hand and looking in the direction of San Juan. He was trying to decide the highest price he might ask the people who would probably buy cheese that day.

"Whom are you looking for, Roberto?" a man who was walking by dressed in his best clothes, inquired meaningly.

"Nobody," stammered Roberto in confusion. Then

he noticed that the man was all dressed up, though this was a working-day. "Why Pablo where are you going?"

"Oh, not far," answered Pablo.

"What do you have there?" asked Roberto curiously, observing that Pablo had something done up in red paper and carefully tied with ribbon.

"Queso de hoja," replied Pablo carelessly, and passed on.

Roberto was somewhat puzzled at this answer. No sooner had Pablo disappeared than another fellow came by La Preferida all dressed in his best clothes, going in the direction of San Juan. He too carried a parcel, this one wrapped in yellow paper, and also tied with ribbon.

"Good morning, *amigo,"* said Roberto, "and what may you have in that pretty package?"

"Queso de hoja," replied this man and continued on his way.

"How very strange!" thought Roberto. His surprise was increased when a third fellow came up with a conspicuous packet covered with green paper.

"Buenos días," faltered Roberto. "Why do you not stop awhile?"

"Oh no! I am in a hurry," said this man.

"You have a very fine *regalo* there for some one," ventured Roberto.

"Ah, yes," said the man. *"Queso de hoja."* And he too walked away before Roberto had recovered his astonishment enough to ask any questions.

Now scarcely had this man turned the bend in the road, than there came still another with a fancy bundle. He bowed to Roberto.

"*Hola!* I suppose you too have *queso de hoja?*" exclaimed Roberto.

"Why yes; certainly," responded the man, hastening onward.

"Hey! Come back!" called Roberto. "What is the meaning of this?"

"I can't stop now," cried the other disappearing.

Roberto was nearly crazy with curiosity. And here followed a sixth man! Roberto ran out into the road. "Look here, my friend," he cried, grabbing the man by the arm, "I must have an explanation of this!"

"Explanation of what?" said the startled man, pulling angrily away.

"Of what is in that package!" shouted the exasperated Roberto.

"It's none of your business, what is in this package," retorted the man, "but if it will do you any good to know, it is rice and beans."

"Rice and beans!" shouted Roberto. "You're sure it's not *queso de hoja?*"

"*Queso de hoja?*" said the man. "Do you think I have been stealing? Why I have not had any *queso de hoja* since you raised the price so outrageously." And muttering to himself the man went on down the road.

Roberto returned to his doorway, scratching his head in perplexity. Just then another man passed by. "Good morning," called Roberto, "I suppose you too have rice and beans!" and he laughed loudly.

"What are you laughing at?" called the other. "Rice and beans? Nonsense! I have *queso de hoja*—the best in the country!" And he waved his gay-colored parcel at Roberto, as he went off around the bend.

Roberto now began to think that he must be under a spell, else how could such very queer things be taking place? And by the time so many men that he had lost count of them had passed, each carrying *queso de hoja,* he was convinced that surely he was either bewitched or crazy. What could possibly be the meaning of such strange proceedings?

But he had no opportunity to wonder more just then, for there, all of a sudden, came the great motor car of Don Juan, and that smiling person was waving a friendly greeting to the bewildered storekeeper.

No time to solve mysteries now! He must hasten to serve his illustrious customer. He ran into the store and came out carrying a whole tray piled with Gertrudis' prize cheeses—that Don Juan might choose for himself the very finest. Roberto, who had covered the cheese with a napkin, advanced bowing, and smiling his most beaming smile.

"Good day, Roberto," said Don Juan. "And what have you on that tray?"

"*Queso de hoja,* señor!" replied Roberto sweeping off the napkin with a flourish.

Suddenly, to his pain and astonishment, the dignified Don Juan shouted with uncontrollable laughter. Roberto regarded him, his own mouth falling open in amazement. What could have happened? Had Don Juan lost his mind?

"My good man," gasped Don Juan, as soon as he had partly regained his composure, "you must forgive me for laughing. But when you realize that this is exactly the twenty-first time in the space of an hour that I have received that very same answer, you will understand that

it begins to sound like a joke! At half-mile intervals for the last ten miles, a man has sprung into the middle of the road, stopping my car. And then as the car stopped he has held out a package. And when I have asked what it was, he has courteously replied, '*Queso de hoja,* señor. You will honor me by accepting it as a gift!' So by now I have no less than one hundred cakes of *queso de hoja* which you may see for yourself," and he opened the door of the limousine. There on the seat beside him were every one of those fatal packages which had been carried past La Preferida that morning. Roberto recognized them with a sinking heart.

"But—but perhaps this cheese that I have here—" he began.

"My good Roberto," interrupted the other, "you must have told the whole countryside of my fondness for cheese. And surely I am duly grateful to them for showing their friendliness in this remarkable manner. But there is already more here than I could eat in a month. Besides I am going to a celebration where I shall have no place to keep it and I fear it will spoil. But I remembered that you had a cheese store. So I am going to do you a good turn by giving you all this cheese, and you can sell it and the profits will be yours!"

Then Don Juan, who apparently believed he was being very noble, ordered his chauffeur to carry every bit of the cheese into the store, in spite of the protestations of Roberto.

Roberto was raging inwardly. He now knew, too well, the trick which had been played on him—for not only would he sell nothing to Don Juan that day, but he was supplied with a great quantity of cheese which he could

not possibly dispose of at his new price of twenty-five cents. Oh, the villains! What a revenge they were having! And he dared not say a word to Don Juan lest he betray the trick, and even worse, the cause of its origin which was his own foolishness. Also he knew that he had been taught a lesson, for he had always *sold* the cheese to the high official for an exorbitant price, and these poor fellows had given it to him. "Don Juan must also be thinking this," he thought miserably.

But whatever were Don Juan's thoughts, he did not disclose them, and rode away still smiling. Roberto always wondered afterwards if perhaps Don Juan had played a part in the conspiracy! He now sat down in the midst of all the cheese, and thought bitterly of his plight. When he went gloomily home at noon, he was met by a smiling Gertrudis who began talking before he had a chance to say a word.

"Oh, Roberto, what *do* you think? No sooner had you left this morning than there came twenty men wishing to buy *queso de hoja.* They said they had heard that I had made an extra supply so that you might pick out the *perfect* ones to sell to the officials. Then they said that they would like to buy the poorer cheeses. They argued that most of them would doubtless spoil before you could sell them all, and offered me five cents apiece for the lot. At first I thought it too little, but then I considered their arguments: so much cheese would certainly spoil before you could sell it, and besides it was not of very good appearance. So I sold them the lot for five cents a cake. Then each man had five cakes and I have *five dollars!*" she finished triumphantly.

Poor Roberto. He sat down weak and speechless.

Not only had these clever fellows taught him a lesson, but they had bought his own cheese from his own innocent wife to do it with and for the ridiculous price of five cents a cake! Oh triple indignity!

He felt he could never face them again! But in those moments of low spirits he realized how foolish he must have seemed during all those weeks. And then the good heart which was in him triumphed. He went back to his store and straightway printed a sign which read:

Queso de hoja.
Siempre a 10¢.

And that evening he bore the teasing of his triumphant friends very well. Never again was he accused of being greedy or self-important. And he and his wife spent the rest of their days in modest and happy prosperity.

THE ADVENTURE OF ANDRES

Andrés was a poor orphan, eight years old, and Arturo was his uncle. Arturo was strong, but he was very old and had strange ideas. Indeed, he was somewhat crazy. All the people in the mountain village of Naranjal laughed at him; some of the women and children were afraid of him. The poor people felt sorry for Andrés, but they all had a great many boys and girls of their own, so no one could care for him. The richer people probably knew nothing about him. In all Naranjal nobody wanted Andrés.

Arturo took Andrés and went a little way into the mountains and built them a very queer looking house. Sometimes the people from Naranjal, walking about the countryside on Sunday, would pass the funny house and then they would laugh and say "A crazy house for a crazy man!" and old Arturo sitting beside his door would laugh too. Then he would assume a mysterious air and beckon them to come closer. "Listen," he half whispred, "I caught a robber last night!"

The idle listeners smiled in anticipation and exclaimed "Yes, yes, Arturo! Tell us. How did you catch him?"

"I put on my air-colored suit," continued Arturo, "and followed him twenty kilometres through a cane-field. He could not see me. He started to bury the money by a mango tree! I hid behind the tree and shot him three times with my curved gun which shoots around corners.

Then I took the money to the *Jefe*. It was seventy thousand pesos! The *Jefe* was nearly frightened to death when he saw seventy thousand pesos poured from a bag onto his table, because he could not see me in my air-colored suit." Arturo laughed.

Then all the listeners nearly died laughing too. "Ha! Ha! Ho! Ho! Hola, Arturo! Show us your gun which shoots around corners! Show us the reward for the capture! Put on your air-colored suit!" Then Arturo, delighted, would tell them bigger stories, and entertain them for a whole afternoon. All this made little Andrés very unhappy.

Poor old Arturo! He imagined he was a great detective.

In the queer house of Arturo there was only one valuable possession. It was a pair of old Spanish duelling-pistols. No one knew where he had gotten them, but they hung proudly on the thatched wall. The mayor of Naranjal, Honorable Juan Costa, was a collector of antiques. He had many old Spanish arms, jewels and coins. He heard of the pistols and came to see them. He then offered Arturo four dollars for the pair. "No," said Arturo, "with them I captured a hundred of our enemies!" The mayor could not persuade the old man to part with the pistols. When he had gone, little Andrés cried because he was hungry.

During the cutting season, Arturo worked in the cane-fields. Every day he went down to Naranjal with his *machete* and joined the other workers, whom he amused with his fabulous stories. During these hours Andrés played in the streets. Often he went near the school-house and stood outside the windows listening. He

thought he would rather go to school than do anything else in the world. But he could not, for he had no shoes and no money. To go to school became his greatest ambition.

About this time a large amount of money had been stolen from an important business establishment in one of our principal cities. All over the island the police were searching for the robbers. The reward for their capture was one thousand dollars.

Every day Arturo believed he had captured the culprits. He told his stories to the villagers, who always encouraged him because they liked to laugh. His poor old brain became over-excited as he labored under the burning sun. One day he had a fever, and lay in delirium in his fibre hammock. There was no food nor money at all in the house. Andrés was hungry and very frightened, for all the time Arturo kept shouting about the bandits.

Three days passed, and it was the day before Christmas. All over Porto Rico people were preparing for the feast of *Noche Buena*. Andrés sat beside his sick uncle. He was in despair and offered a prayer to the Virgin. When he looked up he saw the old duelling-pistols hanging on the wall. He had an idea. He remembered the mayor and his offer of four dollars. Then he looked fearfully at *tío* Arturo who seemed to be sleeping. Carefully the little boy lifted down the heavy pistols. He was afraid of them and held one in each hand straight out before him.

Andrés started down the rough mountain which was covered with tangled growth, and full of small rocky caves. He was a strange figure with his determined face and the two great pistols held menacingly in front

of him. He went round the corner of a large rock and suddenly stopped. There were two men just entering a cave! They turned and uttered a loud cry. Andrés was too surprised to move and stood pointing his pistols straight at them.

"Do not shoot!" they cried trembling. "We will go!"

Andrés could not yet speak. For three days he had listened to nothing but the delirious words of Arturo, talking of the bandits. The bandits! These must be Arturo's bandits! Andrés was stiff with fright, but he managed to say, "Walk ahead!"

Down the mountain they went stumbling and complaining. Andrés began to feel happy and courageous. Into the streets of Naranjal they came. Wonder and amazement!! At every step of the way more people followed him. Straight to the *Alcaldía* he went with the two men in front of him.

The mayor heard the terrific noise. He came out onto the *balcón*. "What is this!" he exclaimed.

There was a complete silence, while everyone waited to hear what Andrés would say. The simplest speeches are always the greatest.

"Señor," said Andrés in a clear voice, holding up the pistols, "I came to sell these pistols for the four pesos. And also I have brought you the bandits!"

At these words a thundering shout went up from the people. No longer was he Andrés the orphan! No! He was Andrés the hero! Andrés the idol! Andrés the pride of Naranjal!

What a Christmas for these two poor people! The mayor sent a doctor to Arturo and took Andrés into his home. What a feast of *Noche Buena* was celebrated

that night! To Andrés came the reward. Now instead of being a poor orphan, he was almost the richest boy in Naranjal.

When school opened after Three Kings' Day, he was the first to enter the door.

Andrés did not sell the pistols for four dollars! Instead, he gave them to the mayor to keep for him. Years later, when he was an educated and rich man, he was elected mayor of Naranjal. The old mayor had returned to his banana plantation and left Andrés his famous collection. Needless to say the duelling-pistols were hung in a place of honor on the wall of the assembly hall in the *Alcaldía*. And the citizens of Naranjal have never ceased telling of the strange adventure of their great mayor, Don Andrés, and his uncle Arturo.

LUISA'S GIFT

"Mamita," said Luisa one day to her mother, "boys are the only ones who have any real adventures in this world. How tiresome it is to be a girl!"

Then her mother told her that they were soon going to pay a visit to her uncle in Fajardo, and that perhaps while there, she might have some interesting experiences.

"Oh, dear," sighed Luisa, "I do not believe I shall have any more adventures in Fajardo than here in Caguas. Why do we not go to San Juan?" But she did not know what was in store for her.

One Thursday, as soon as Luisa came from school, she and her father and mother left in their automobile for Fajardo. As they were gliding along the smooth highway between Caguas and Humacao, Luisa began to feel excited and glad. "What a beautiful day!" she exclaimed. "How fine that tomorrow is a holiday! Oh, I am sure now that we shall have a delightful vacation in Fajardo!"

"That is the way to talk," said her mother. "Always try to be in a cheerful state of mind. Then whatever you do will seem agreeable."

It was not long before they passed through Gurabo and Juncos. Then came Las Piedras, and soon between a cleft in the hills, they could see Humacao lying fair and white upon the plain. This vista they admired very much; but when they reached the city, they only stopped

long enough to buy some fruit, and then sped on toward the Playa. The ocean was a glorious mixture of blue and green, flecked with small white waves. Graceful cocoanut palms grew right down to the water's edge, and some even leaned out over the sea, as though hoping to glimpse themselves mirrored there, should the water ever become calm. In the distance lay the island of Vieques, shim-

Graceful palm trees grew right down to the water's edge.

mering violet against a sky radiant with reflected lights from the tropical sunset.

"That island looks like a place of dreams," said Luisa softly. All of them were silent before such a gorgeous display of beauty. When they reached Naguabo it was fast growing dark.

"We must hasten in order to be at Fajardo before bedtime," said Luisa's father.

Their way now led through level stretches of canefields. Far to their left they could dimly see the blue mountains of the Luquillo Range, with the three peaks

of "El Yunque," our anvil mountain, pointing high into the sky.

When finally they reached Fajardo, Luisa was so tired that she went to bed immediately.

Luisa's uncle Adolfo was a fisherman. He owned a fine boat which had two sails and even boasted a small cabin. About three days a week he sailed out to sea to catch fish and lobsters which he sold to the markets and the hotels in San Juan for excellent prices. It was his custom to rise very early on these days, so that he might set sail before the sun was up. Many times he remained away all day and did not return till far in the night. The fact that he could navigate the difficult harbor of Fajardo in the dark proves that he was a good mariner.

The next day Luisa went with her uncle to see his vessel. The shore was lined with small boats, as the fisher-folk were resting on account of the holiday. Also there was a special attraction which had drawn many people to the place. Anchored in the middle of the bay were two long, peculiar-looking ships both painted gray, with great white numbers on each side of their bows.

"Oh! Oh!" cried Luisa. "I know what *they* are! They are 'destroyers' belonging to the United States Navy! We learned about them in school! And half the navy is now at the Island of Culebra for maneuvers. Oh! I had forgotten all about it!"

"Yes," said her uncle, "I thought you had—and that to see these ships would be a pleasant surprise for you."

Luisa, who was nearly fourteen, was a very bright girl in school, and was soon to be promoted to the Eighth Grade. She gazed eagerly at the destroyers. "Oh, if I could only go on board one of them!" she cried. "Think

of the wonderful things I could tell in school when I returned! And I could speak to the men in English too."

"I'm sorry," said *tío* Adolfo, "but no one is allowed to go on board. Now, if you have looked at them enough, come and see my boat."

Luisa was delighted with the trim little vessel which was called "Carmen" after her uncle Adolfo's wife, who was *tía* Carmen. She went down into the tiny cabin, tried to climb the ropes, examined the fishing nets, and decided that her uncle must live a very enjoyable life indeed since he could go to sea in a boat like this whenever he desired. But imagine her joy when he told her that if tomorrow were a fine calm day, he would take her with him. She was fairly dancing with happiness when they returned to the house.

"So you are finally going to have an adventure," said her mother.

"Yes!" exulted Luisa. "And I am only a girl! Think what a boy would give for a sail in the 'Carmen'!"

Luisa had to go to bed that night very early so that she would be ready to get up long before sunrise. She could scarcely go to sleep, because she was so excited, and also because she was worried for fear the morrow would not be clear and calm. But when she did sleep at last, she dreamed the queerest thing. She thought that she sailed away with her uncle in the "Carmen" until they came to that dream-island, Vieques, and that there they disembarked. But while they were on the island, it began to move swiftly through the water until it reached the naval ships at Culebra, where at once it turned into a destroyer!

When Luisa awoke, she could not remember much of

the dream except that she had finally arrived at Culebra where the fleet was anchored. Oh! if only her uncle would sail all the way to Culebra! She did not dare mention such a thing. But you may be sure that she kept on hoping very hard.

It seemed strange to get up while it was still night and go down to the edge of the black water. She could not distinguish the hills on the other side of the harbor, and the little boat was only found by a twinkling lantern which swayed to and fro from one of the short masts. Three other men soon came. These comprised her uncle's crew. By lantern-light they began to unfurl the sails and prepare for the day's cruise. Luisa noticed queer pictures in red and blue on their bare arms. These she knew must be tattoo marks. She felt very small, and not at all like herself as she sat huddled in the door of the cabin and watched the proceedings. It was quite easy and thrilling for her to imagine that she was a princess who had been captured by pirates.

By the time they were ready to start, the sky had turned faintly gray. But you could not see for any distance, as the air was full of heavy fog. A chill morning breeze had started blowing. Finally, with a cry, the men loosened the rope which held the "Carmen" to the pier and they were off! Off on what was later going to prove to be one of the most exciting days of Luisa's life.

Now they seemed to be sailing right into the face of a glorious sunrise—where the sky was all pink and gold and the water a pale, silvery blue. On the port side, Luisa noticed many odd little islands, some being merely yellowed rocks and too small to support even one tree.

The boat proceeded slowly, but always to the eastward. While one of the men steered, her uncle and the two others fished both with nets and lines. They drew up a net and in it were several small fish. One of the lines jerked. After considerable struggle, a great fish of perhaps thirty-five pounds was landed. The men were especially pleased with this. They were now nearing one of the larger islands. The next time the net came up, it contained three wriggling lobsters.

"How ugly they are!" cried Luisa.

"But how good they taste," replied her uncle. "The people in San Juan pay a high price for these excellent lobsters."

The fish and lobsters were carefully kept fresh in large receptacles containing water. Luisa began to feel very hungry, thinking how appetizing a nice boiled lobster would be. "How queer it is that they turn such a beautiful red when they are cooked," she thought.

Just then she saw a huge black shape rise out of the sea. *"¡Un tiburón! ¡Un tiburón!"* The sailors tried their best to harpoon the giant shark, but it escaped them. Luisa was glad that they did not succeed, for she did not want to be on the same ship with such a terrible creature.

Suddenly a cloud passed over the sun, and in the same moment the breeze quickened. The men who had been engrossed in trying to catch the huge fish, looked about quickly. Clouds had gathered in the west, and they had come so far that looking behind, Luisa could not tell whether it was Porto Rico in the distance or only a narrow blue cloud on the horizon. The little vessel began to move forward more rapidly over the roughening waves.

"We had better make for home," said *tío* Adolfo un-

easily, thinking of the child who might become very frightened and ill if a storm came up.

"Oh, *tío* Adolfo," said Luisa delighted to see that their craft was moving so swiftly eastward. "How far away is Culebra?"

"About twenty miles from Porto Rico," answered her uncle in surprise.

"But how far from *here?*" she persisted.

"Well, we have come about halfway I expect," said her uncle. He consulted his watch. "We have been out almost five hours—though sailing slowly. Yes, we must be halfway there. But why do you ask, *Luisita?*"

"Oh, uncle," she now implored, "please, please, let us go to Culebra! Oh, I do so want to see the United States warships."

Her uncle was much surprised. He had never thought of doing such a thing. He looked at the sky. Though it appeared as if it might rain, his long experience at sea told him that there would be no severe storm. An unusual breeze was blowing out of the west. And besides, he himself had a great curiosity to see the United States fleet.

"But it means that we would not get home until very, very late," he suggested to his niece.

"But, oh *tío* Adolfo, think of the opportunity! What a wonderful sight it must be! What an adventure for us! Why, it would be something to remember all our lives!" exclaimed Luisa eagerly.

"I did not know girls could be so interested in such things," thought Don Adolfo to himself. "This new education is certainly remarkable! My niece is indeed a very modern young lady." "But Luisa," he said aloud, "perhaps your parents will be worried."

"But they *know* I'm going on an adventure," she protested, "and besides, we can probably send them a radio message."

"What a girl you are! Where did you learn about radio?" asked her uncle, admiringly.

"We learned all about it in our 'Current Events' class in school," she replied, and then begged: "Oh, *tío* Adolfo, please, please let us go!"

Just then they heard a strange buzzing noise in the distance. Looking around, they espied what seemed to be a large bird approaching out of the west. The whirring sound increased. Now they could see that the "bird" was a huge hydroplane. It came so quickly that soon it was directly over their heads. "Oh! Oh!" shouted Luisa, jumping up and down. "It's a seaplane—and look! look! it is painted the same color as the destroyers. Oh uncle, it belongs to the Navy and it is going to Culebra! Come, come, let us go!"

The uncle was now about as excited as his niece, and at last he consented to go to Culebra. All sails were hoisted so that full advantage could be taken of the brisk wind, and soon they were skimming swiftly to the eastward. Luisa stood in the prow. The wind whistled all around her. The boat dipped and rose gracefully over the swelling waves. Her eyes were straining to catch the first glimpse of the fleet. How would it look? She had no idea. Once a destroyer passed them, going at full speed in the direction of Fajardo. How fast it could plow through the water—faster than any other kind of ship afloat, *tío* Adolfo informed her.

The first thing Luisa noticed was that the eastern horizon was growing very smoky. Why was that?

Then not long afterwards she seemed to see in the distance many little sticks of different sizes rising out of the sea. How curious!

These sticks, as they gradually came closer, proved to be the smokestacks and gun-towers of the great battleships.

"Why can you see the *tops* of the ships first?" asked her uncle, to test her.

"Because the world is round, of course," answered his niece.

Now, indeed, did a magnificent panorama greet their eyes. Away to the left rose Culebra. And spreading far into the sea, to the south of the island, lay the enormous fleet—submarines, destroyers, and their tenders; airplane carriers, supply ships, hospital ships, cruisers, huge battleships, and all sorts of auxiliary craft. There were so many of them that from a distance, the ensemble appeared like some monstrous, gray industrial city rising directly out of the sea! And above this vast marine city flew and circled numbers of hydroplanes, like gigantic birds. No one could wish for a sight more thrilling. The people on the little fishing boat held their breath in wonder.

"What mighty wealth and power is represented there," said Don Adolfo at last, in a hushed voice. "What a wonderful country is the great United States of America! And think, Luisa, that splendid fleet is only *half* of our Navy! Imagine, if the *whole* fleet were gathered together in one place!"

They drew closer. Great was their amazement at the size and number of the battleships. On their sterns, they could read the names "Maryland," "Arizona," "New

York," "Texas," "Pennsylvania," "California," and many others.

Because there were such numbers of vessels afloat, the spaces between were almost like watery streets. And these "streets" were by no means empty. The traffic was very heavy, and to avoid collisions, klaxons were sounding at every corner! "These waterways are busier than the streets of San Juan," laughed Luisa. "And those little boats are 'ocean-automobiles.'"

These "ocean-automobiles," as Luisa called them, were the motor-launches used by the officers in going from one ship to another. While they were commenting on this interesting spectacle, Uncle Adolfo was wondering if they should have ventured among the naval vessels in this manner. A launch, full of white-clad officers, was coming close to them.

"Oh, uncle, how beautiful they look!" cried Luisa in great admiration. "How clean and white their uniforms are, and what magnificent gold-braid and buttons they are all wearing! See that gray-haired gentleman in the center—how dignified and handsome he is!" And the little girl leaned far over the edge of the "Carmen" so that she might observe him more closely.

The gray-haired officer in turn caught sight of the enthusiastic child.

"See that fishing boat," he said to his companions. "How can it have gotten here? And look at that beautiful child who is smiling at us so prettily. Let us go nearer so that we can call her. I think perhaps she would like to speak to you officers." The gray-haired gentleman spoke very kindly, for he was thinking of his own pretty grand-daughter far away in the United States. The

other officers were quite amazed, for they were not accustomed to such an unusual suggestion during hours of duty. The launch was then guided close beside the "Carmen."

"How do you do, little girl?" called the smiling gentleman.

"Very well, thank you; and you?" answered Luisa promptly. The officer was charmed with her quaint English.

"Where are you from?" he asked. "Culebra?"

"No, señor; from Porto Rico. We have come all the way since morning!"

"Is that possible!" exclaimed the gentleman in astonishment. "And what is your name?"

"Luisa, *Señor Oficial,*" she replied.

All the officers were smiling now at the gracious manners of the lovely black-haired child.

Luisa had never been so happy in her life. She did not wish the launch to go away. How to keep them there? Suddenly she had an idea.

"Please, señor, will you wait just a moment?" she asked politely.

"Yes, Luisa," answered the gentleman.

Then she disappeared from the side of the "Carmen." Presently she reappeared, holding up in triumph a large wriggling lobster.

"I wish to present six of these live lobsters to you with my uncle's compliments!" she said breathlessly.

How those officers laughed, all but the gray-haired one who wore so many bright-colored bars of ribbon on the left front of his jacket—decorations for bravery and long distinguished service to his country!

"I thank you profoundly," he said with a bow. "There is nothing in the world I prefer to fresh lobster!"

Tío Adolfo was utterly astounded at these proceedings, but managed to give an order to one of the men to have a large covered basket filled with the lobsters. When this had been accomplished and the basket lowered into the capacious launch, the gray-haired officer appeared to think a moment, and then he said: "What can I do to repay you for this splendid gift?"

"Oh, *Señor Oficial,*" gasped Luisa, scarce daring to speak. "You are very, very welcome. But in all the world the thing I should like to do most, is to step just for one moment upon a battleship!"

All the officers assumed an expression of doubt as they heard this request; but the one to whom she made it, replied: "Surely that will not be difficult. Just come into our boat and you will be there in no time at all!" Then indeed did the other officers look surprised, but of course they said nothing, and hastened to assist Luisa into the launch.

Then what a half-hour she spent on board the great battleship "California"! She even climbed halfway up one of the high gun-towers. She was amazed at the size of the giant guns. Then the gallant officer showed her some of the luxurious cabins, where the furniture was more elegant than any she had ever seen. "This is where I live, when at sea," he said, "and here is a picture of my home in the States; and that photograph is my little grand-daughter who looks a great deal like you, Miss Luisa."

Luisa admired the pictures very much. Then the officer gave her some delicious cakes, which he said were

made right there on that big boat. "We have three thousand men on this ship," he told her. Then it came time for her to depart, and the kind officer sent her back to the "Carmen" in his sumptuous launch. Just as she was leaving, he gave her a card, saying with a smile: "Good-bye, this will tell you my name. Thank you again for the lobsters. You may be sure I shall enjoy them. I am delighted to have had such a charming little visitor on board the 'California.'" And he actually made her a grand bow, as though she were a real grown-up lady.

Luisa was too excited by this time to do more than thank him politely and say good-bye.

All the way back in the launch, she felt that she was floating on air. In her hot little hand, she still tightly clasped the card which she had utterly forgotten to look at.

When she reached the "Carmen," she could scarcely speak fast enough to tell her uncle all that she had seen. "Oh!" she exclaimed, "what a wonderful man that was!"

"What was his name?" asked her uncle, who was as thrilled as she.

"Oh, I don't know! I forgot to ask. But wait! He gave me his *tarjeta* and said his name was on it!" and she handed the crumpled card to *tío* Adolfo.

She saw astonishment spread over his face as he read.

"What *is* it?" she cried. "Oh do speak! Let me see!" and she took the card from his hand.

Then indeed was she exuberant with joy. Actually she had been the guest of no less than an *Admiral* of the United States Navy on board his own flagship! And *she* was the girl who had complained of never having had an adventure!

The "Carmen" could not sail fast enough over the waves on the homeward journey. Luisa was not able to rest because she was thinking so hard of her exciting day. It was late in the night when the little vessel made its way slowly into the dark bay at Fajardo.

The parents and aunt of Luisa had become somewhat anxious, and great was their relief when the "Carmen" pulled up alongside the wharf. Luisa had finally fallen asleep from exhaustion and had to be lifted out of the boat into her father's arms. At this she only partially awoke, and was heard to murmur sleepily:

"¡Oh, mamita! ¡Qué aventura he tenido! ¡Imagínate! ¡Le regalé seis langostas a un almirante!" [1]

[1] "Oh, mother dear! What an adventure I have had! Just imagine! I presented six lobsters to an Admiral!"

PAPA QUINTERO

Papá Quintero is one of the very oldest men in Naranjal. He has a sharp crook in his back, and his hair is thin and white. But you would really be amazed to see how lightly age rests upon this jovial old fellow. No footsteps along the street are brisker than his; no "*¡Adios!*" is spoken more cheerfully than Papá Quintero's. His one useful eye displays a livelier sparkle than the two good ones of many a younger man; and as for his friendly smile, there is none kindlier in all Naranjal. The secret of all this is, Papá Quintero is successful—and, as we say, nothing fits a man so well as success. But it was not always thus with Papá Quintero. By no means.

When they were young, Papá and Mamá Quintero had had a great many children. Oh, a great many indeed, so that Papá Quintero's wages as a laborer in the cane-fields had never been sufficient to buy food for all the hungry mouths under the roof of their humble home: and Mamá Quintero had been compelled to do dressmaking in order to help support their large family. She sewed so well that the very richest people of the town often brought their finest silks and satins and laces to be fashioned by her clever hands.

As this good soul never wasted anything, she gradually accumulated a large boxful of small pieces of material. These were scraps of every imaginable kind and color from the innumerable garments she had made. "Sometime

they will be useful," she was often heard to declare. But to what mysterious use Mamá Quintero expected these odds and ends to be put, she never explained.

In the early days, Papá Quintero himself had often been obliged to aid his wife in finishing some urgent piece of work. Consequently, he had become almost as dexterous with the needle as with the *machete!* He had assisted with everything from a carnival costume and a christening robe, to a rag-doll for one of his own little girls. These home-made dolls, however, had always been distasteful to his children who were constantly crying for the imported ones sold in the stores on the plaza; but there had never been enough money in the Quintero household to buy any of that sort. In the course of time, Papá Quintero had learned to make quite respectable-looking dolls from the bits of cloth his wife had saved, and with these, his daughters had had to be content.

But all this was long ago, and their many sons and daughters were now married. They had scattered far and wide over Porto Rico in search of a living for themselves and their families; for by this time they too had great numbers of children, and it would have been indeed difficult to count the members of the Quintero family had they all assembled in one place! And poor, tired old Mamá Quintero was also gone. Nevermore would her busy hands model pretty dresses and costumes for the weddings, christenings and carnivals of Naranjal.

So Papá Quintero was now alone in the small and quiet house—alone with only his memories. As he was seventy-six years old, hard of hearing and with rapidly failing eyesight, there was no one willing to give him employment. "His children should look after him!" people said. But

Papá Quintero knew that his children found life a hard enough struggle without the added burden of caring for an old man, so he did not appeal to them for help. He sat all day in a *bejuco* rocking-chair before his doorway, watching the busy people of Naranjal pass up and down the street, and thought of how desperately poor he really was and what a paltry sum of money he actually possessed. He felt that life no longer held a place for him.

One morning, as he was passing through the room in which Mamá Quintero used to do her sewing, Papá Quintero stumbled over the large wooden box which still contained the *tiritas de tela* saved by his wife. When he looked inside, tears came into his eyes because of the memories stirred by the hundreds of scraps of material so neatly folded and carefully tied in bundles. Later in the day as he sat half-asleep in his doorway, thinking dreamily of the past, he noticed three little girls who were playing a few paces beyond in the street. Each one had a small, soiled doll, of the kind on sale in the *tienda*. Somehow it seemed to Papá Quintero that these little girls were his own young daughters come back once more. But no; his children had never played with dolls from the store. "*Their* dolls all came out of the big wooden box," he smilingly thought. Then suddenly, no longer sleepy, he rose to his feet and disappeared within the house. No more was he seen sitting idly in his rocking-chair by the door.

"What can Papá Quintero be doing?" inquired several of the neighbors, noticing that he was not in his accustomed place. But, sad to say, no one was really much interested in this poor old man: and since these neighbors knew he was not ill, having seen him occasionally emerge from

his house to go to the corner grocery store, they bothered no further about him.

Great would have been their astonishment, however, if they had investigated what in fact was keeping Papá Quintero out of sight. The use had at last been found for Mamá Quintero's box of scraps. They were scattered all over the room—a riot of color, in the midst of which sat Papá Quintero actually whistling with happy eagerness. And as he whistled, he plied his needle and snipped busily with his scissors—for Papá Quintero was once more making dolls!

First he made the bodies from some plain white material. These he stuffed tightly with cotton and bits of rags. When they were securely sewed, he embroidered the hair with black or yellow, or even red yarn. Little blue or black beads formed the eyes; and the mouth and nose consisted of one horizontal and one vertical stitch apiece! When he had finished a doll, he would place it against the wall. How curious they all looked, sitting there waiting to be clothed!

But when he began to make the dresses and hats, he realized that he had not sat in vain watching the women and girls of Naranjal, for he had preserved in his mind all the details of what he had seen them wearing. The more he sewed, the easier it became, and the more excited he grew. Now the dolls, with their funny faces, were one by one clothed in costumes of bright colors, such as day after day old Papá Quintero had observed passing by his door.

Finally the dolls were finished—fifty of them. They were somewhat crude of course, for they had been made by

aged and shaky hands. But you should have seen them! Not one but boasted bead-earrings!—for what lady of Naranjal would have been seen without her *zarcillos?* Many of them had gay shawls about their shoulders. Some carried miniature Porto Rican brooms; others held tiny fans. Several were dressed in the blazing colors so much loved by the country people, and some wore little native straw hats! Old Papá Quintero was as merry as a boy while he placed the dolls in a broad flat basket, preparatory to taking them forth into the streets. "I should have made more," he thought. "These won't last any time at all." He limped out into the bright sunshine, which, however, was no brighter at that moment than were his hopes.

It never takes long for a crowd to gather in Porto Rico. People came from all sides to see what Papá Quintero had in his basket. How they laughed when they saw that the old man was peddling dolls!

"*¡Qué muñecas!*" exclaimed one woman, "they look just like real people!"

"Yes;" said another, "but anyone could make such dolls."

"I do not like them, mamma," cried a little girl. "I want a doll from the *tienda.*"

And while everyone was quite astonished to hear that Papá Quintero had made the dolls himself, nevertheless, no one offered to buy.

Poor Papá Quintero! He sold only two dolls in five days. "Stupid people of Naranjal!" he complained to himself. "They do not recognize a beautiful doll when they see it! I shall go down to San Juan: the inhabitants

there have more intelligence and will be glad to buy my dolls!" So the tired old man prepared to go to the metropolis where the intelligent people lived.

But he was mistaken. The people of Naranjal were not stupid. They simply did not desire to invest their money in things that were no different from what they were accustomed to see daily. They did not care to purchase dolls which, if they wished, they could easily make themselves; and when they did have money to spend for dolls, they preferred to buy *novelties* such as those on sale in the shops, with their wax or china faces, real hair, and lovely lace-trimmed dresses!

Papá Quintero arrived in San Juan and began walking about the noisy downtown streets of this bewildering and strange city; but he presently found that the people here were no more eager to buy than they had been in Naranjal! They would look at the dolls and then, laughing, turn away. He could not understand; so in order to learn, if possible, how to sell his dolls, he stood for a long time beside a boy who was selling mechanical toys. This boy disposed of thirty toys in an hour! But no one wanted a Porto Rican doll. Soon night came, and Papá Quintero realized that he was penniless, for he had made no sales and had had to spend his last dollar to get to San Juan. So, tired and hungry, he crept away into a corner of the Cathedral steps, and there passed the weary sleepless hours till morning.

When dawn arrived, he was so cold and stiff that he could scarcely stand. The great Cathedral doors swung open for early mass. Fearfully, Papá Quintero slipped inside. The beauty and vastness of the interior astounded him. Heavenly music from a huge organ far in the front

rolled through the incense-laden atmosphere. The old man did not believe that one so poor and insignificant as he should stay in such a magnificent place. So he whispered a tremulous prayer to the Virgin and hastily left the temple. This humble worshipper did not know that whether it be the plain country church or the rich city Cathedral, the house of God is open alike to one and all.

The Virgin, who listens to rich and poor, great and small, old and young, had heard the timorous plea of this worthy old man, for no sooner had he limped down to the plaza, than he was greeted in a most cordial manner by another old vender who was selling handsome Porto Rican canes, made in Cabo Rojo from many varieties of native wood.

"Buenos días, compadre," said the cane-seller. *"¿Cómo va el negocio?"*

"Buenos días," replied Papá Quintero, wearily. "Business is very poor." Then he proceeded to tell his sympathetic listener how he had not sold a single doll in all San Juan. "It is death to my hopes, and to me," he said, "for I have no money."

The cane-seller was eyeing him curiously. "Did you ever sell anything before?" he questioned.

"Never," answered Papá Quintero, in surprise.

"Then come with me to the café. While we take some coffee, I shall tell you a secret, and show you how you can sell *all* your dolls!"

When they came out of the café, Papá Quintero was no longer trembling. He had eaten a good breakfast at the expense of his new friend. His face shone once more with happy eagerness. For he had not only partaken of food, but his mind had been fed as well: it was filled with

the words of wisdom spoken to him by the old cane-seller. "Come, *amigo mío,*" said the latter, "let us go at once, for this is precisely the day to put into practice what I have told you."

Now the two new friends hobbled down towards the San Juan water front. Turning the corner of the Federal Building, Papá Quintero had his first glimpse of the beautiful harbor. A great twenty-thousand-ton ship was just steaming in. Papá Quintero was so amazed at the sight and size of it that his mouth remained wide open. Finally he closed it long enough to stammer: *"Pero---pero yo no hablo inglés."*

"That is all right," reassured his friend. "You don't have to speak English. All you have to say is 'Porto Rican dolls, seventy-five cents.'"

Now the enormous cruise ship had cast anchor, and the American tourists began to come ashore in boatloads.

"Porto Rican dolls, seventy-five cents," quavered old Papá Quintero, fearfully, as the first newcomers approached.

"Oh! Look at these remarkable native dolls!" cried a woman. "I have never seen anything like them before! I must have one!" and immediately she produced seventy-five cents and paid for a doll.

Old Papá Quintero was so astounded that he almost forgot to say *"Gracias."*

"My friend makes them," explained the cane-seller, who was delighted to see Papá Quintero sell his first doll.

"He *makes* them!" exclaimed the lady enthusiastically. Then she called to some of her friends: "Do come and see these nice Porto Rican dolls. This old man makes them himself. And look at these wonderful canes too!"

Crowds at the water front of San Juan awaiting the arrival of a tourist ship.

The tourists crowded about the two old men who were now extremely busy. It was no time at all—less than an hour—till forty-seven dolls were sold and Papá Quintero had thirty-five dollars and a quarter in his pocket. He had only one doll left and was almost speechless with gratitude, both towards his friend the cane-seller and towards the kind tourists who had bought his precious dolls. Here at last were some intelligent people!

But again Papá Quintero was mistaken. The people from the United States were no more intelligent than the Porto Ricans, nor had they spent their money because they felt sorry for Papá Quintero. They bought the dolls because they were something they really wanted—something *different* from what they could buy at home. These travellers from another land were just like the people of Naranjal in this respect; and had Papá Quintero been selling ordinary American dolls, they would have paid no attention to him whatever.

"Keep that last doll," advised his friend the cane man, who by this time had sold most of his canes, "and come with me."

He led the grateful doll vender to a little souvenir shop where the American owner kept on sale all kinds of Porto Rican objects for tourists. There were baskets and hammocks, articles of drawn-work and *bordados,* hats, *güícharos* and many other native products.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Smith! My friend makes these Porto Rican dolls," said he in halting English. "He just sold forty-seven to the *turistas.* He will let you have a supply of them for seventy-five cents each. They can easily sell for one dollar. Will you take them?"

The shop owner, after looking at the doll carefully and

realizing that it was in truth a novelty, agreed to take as many as Papá Quintero could send him. So a bargain was made.

Then, after giving his friend a million thanks and blessing him, Papá Quintero left for Naranjal, anxious to begin making more dolls immediately.

And that is why old Papá Quintero walks the streets of Naranjal so briskly and cheerfully. He is now a successful manufacturer of Porto Rican dolls. He never can send too many to the shop in San Juan, for the continental tourists are always eager for these novelties. But do not imagine that because he has become famous, the little girls of Naranjal now play with Papá Quintero's dolls! No, they are just as keen as ever for the imported ones which are displayed in the shop windows.

Papá Quintero is successful not because of his skillfulness alone, but also because of the valuable lesson that he learned from his old friend, the cane-seller: *to succeed in the art of salesmanship, one must find the right market.* To the people of Naranjal, Papá Quintero's dolls were quite commonplace, but to the tourists from afar, they were novel, attractive and desirable. Such is human nature!

THE TWO STATUES

Everyone who has visited the city of San Juan remembers the Plaza Colón. On two sides of this spacious, well-paved square, with its many low and artistic benches, we see attractive modern buildings and a few romantic remnants of old-time Spanish architecture. The popular Municipal Theater occupies the third side, and on the fourth is the handsome Porto Rican Casino, high behind which rise the massive bastioned walls of the ancient San Cristóbal fortress. The plaza's central splendor is the towering marble statue of the illustrious Christopher Columbus. This majestic figure, erect on a tall slender column, which rests upon a huge granite pedestal, faces ever to the westward, as did the famous admiral himself. Under Borinquen's brilliant sun, against the background of her azure sky, it dazzles the eye with its blazing whiteness. On dark nights it looms mystically against the stars. But most beautiful of all—it fairly gleams like a radiant spirit when the glorious tropical moon sheds floods of silver down upon it. Calm and serene it stands there above the restless, hurrying crowds of people. To some of those who look up at it often, it is a concrete memorial of magnificent achievement; and to others, it is a symbol of that marvellous vision which burns in the souls of those dauntless men who advance the civilization of the world.

Some distance from the Plaza Colón, up the steep hill towards El Morro, and just beyond the *Obispado,* is an-

The plaza's central splendor is the towering marble statue of the illustrious Christopher Columbus.

other plaza and another statue. This plaza is smaller, and is surrounded on three sides by some of the oldest houses in the New World. On the fourth side is the Church of San José, which dates back to the sixteenth century, and within whose venerable walls is reared a superb altar of gold. The statue which stands in the center of this ancient square is neither tall nor especially majestic. It is an upright bronze figure in armor, surmounting a solid base of stone. There is nothing very spiritual about it; still it bears a look of fearlessness and

courage. In its face we do not read exaltation so much as we see resolution and purpose. And while this figure is also westward turned, it does not seem to be peering with vision-filled eyes, though its sturdy, upraised arm extends in that direction as if pointing to glorious and practical realities. Here we see mingled all the bravery, the tireless energy, the steadfastness, the adventurous spirit of the true *conquistador*. For this bronze portrait represents none other than that intrepid soldier and colonizer —Juan Ponce de León, the first Governor of Porto Rico.

The days of these two men, thus immortalized in bronze and marble, have long since passed into well-known history. But so great were their lives, so remarkable their personalities, and so inspiring their deeds, that it is doubtful if their influence will ever die. Down the centuries they have served as a strong example for weaker men.

In one of the quaint old houses overlooking the Plaza Colón, Félix was born and there he had always lived. Every day he played in the open square, and often climbed around over the base of the high monument. It is said that we seldom give thought to the things that we see every day, and it is certain that this little boy had never given much thought to Columbus.

At this time Félix was ten years of age and in the fifth grade at the José Julián Acosta School, which is just opposite the Porto Rican Casino. Here, of course, he had learned about Columbus, and he was proud, as is every Porto Rican lad, that the famous discoverer had once actually landed upon the shores of his native island. But he thought no more than that about the man whose marble image stood high above his playground. Then one night —in fact it was the night of October twelfth, the anni-

versary of the discovery of America—Félix came into a new realization of the greatness of Columbus.

All day, for it was a holiday, he had played in the plaza, and when darkness came, he was very tired. He sat on the narrow balcony with his father, enjoying the cool evening breeze and watching the people—some going to a concert in the municipal theater, others, in holiday attire, moving about the lighted square. A full moon sailed in the clear sky. Far above the merry crowd, gleaming in the moonlight, stood the imposing statue.

Félix's father was a poet. This gay scene, the delightful coolness of the evening, the strains of music drifting across from the theater, the benign spiritual figure towering above it all, enchanted him.

"Félix, my son," he said, "look how wonderful Colón appears! It almost seems that his immortal spirit has come back to haunt his stone image on this historic night!"

"Oh, father, please tell me all about him," pleaded Félix.

So Félix's father told, in the colorful words of a poet, the inspiring story of Christopher Columbus. This took quite a long time, and it grew very late—later than young Félix had ever stayed up. Most of the people in the plaza had gone home. But still came the soft muffled sounds of music from the theater. Félix was not sleepy. In fact he had never been so wide awake, for his boy's heart was thrilled by the exciting tale.

"And so, Félix," concluded his father, "to the weary Old World, Columbus gave a New World in which men had a golden opportunity to begin a perfect life. They did not succeed entirely, for nothing human is ever perfect. But countless great achievements for the benefit of humanity have come out of the strength and vigor of the

New World. Fix your eyes on that statue, my son! Try to realize the greatness of the soul of Columbus—let some of it enter your own soul, so that your life may be one of splendid and worthy accomplishment!"

Never had Félix heard his father speak like this; never had he looked at the figure of Colón with such respect and admiration.

"See how Columbus looks ever to the westward, with almost superhuman vision. In another plaza of this city, Félix, there stands the statue of another great man—not so great as Colón, but still his life also is deserving of study and appreciation. It is the bronze figure of Juan Ponce de León. His extended arm is pointing to the westward, just as the eyes of Columbus are looking in that direction. He was one of the cavaliers who accomplished great things after Columbus had indicated the way. Two silent sentinels they are, watching day and night above San Juan. And perhaps in the dark hours, Félix, when everyone is deep in slumber, these two spirits descend and commune with each other, to discuss what they have observed: and doubtless they are sad that wickedness still continues in the New World as in the Old; but doubtless too, they are both amazed and proud of the grand achievements which their early labors have made possible today!"

Some of this was almost beyond Félix's comprehension; but he was charmed with the idea that the spirits of the two statues visited each other while he and everybody else were asleep. "Oh father," he begged, "won't you please take me to the San José Plaza sometime to see Juan Ponce de León!"

Then Félix went to bed, with his head full of ideas and the beginning of a new ambition in his heart. After this memorable night, he was always looking up at the statue of Columbus, wondering what noble deed *he* might some day perform to benefit the world. Soon he visited the San José Plaza. He justly admired the statue of Juan Ponce—but not so much as that of Colón. On the way home, his father took him into the Cathedral to see the tomb of Ponce de León, whose remains had been brought there after resting more than three hundred years in the Church of San José.

Now in the same year that Félix was born, another boy came into the world, in one of the picturesque old houses overlooking the Plaza of San José. This boy was named Alberto. He, like Félix, played in the plaza, but around the base of the statue of Juan Ponce. He too had reached the age of ten, and was in the fifth grade at the Lincoln School. Of course he had heard the story of Ponce de León, how he had first governed Porto Rico and then sailed away to search for a Fountain of Youth. But he thought no more than that about him, and his father was not a poet who could relate romantic tales to him in the moonlight. In fact he had no father, and lived with his old grandparents.

Now came the end of the year, and both of these boys were promoted to the sixth grade. This meant that in the autumn they would have to attend the Baldorioty de Castro School. Here they eventually met, and very soon became close friends. One day it occurred to Félix to ask Alberto where he lived.

"On the Plaza San José," replied Alberto.

Alberto played in the plaza around the base of the statue of Juan Ponce.

"What!" exclaimed Félix, in delight. "Then you are acquainted with good old Juan Ponce."

"I don't know anybody by that name," said Alberto, mystified.

"Oh, oh!" laughed Félix. "Don't you understand what I mean? I wasn't speaking of a real person, but of the *statue.*" Then he began excitedly to tell Alberto all the things his father had told him, about Columbus, Ponce de León, the two statues, the spirits which commune, and the idea of shaping one's ambitions after the lives of those ad-

mirable men. "Of course Juan Ponce was a great man," concluded Félix, "but I should rather be like Columbus, who was greater."

"I don't know about that," answered Alberto thoughtfully. "There could be only *one* Columbus. I think I should rather try to be like Juan Ponce. There would be more chance to succeed!"

Now began an enthusiastic discussion over the merits of the two heroes, each boy defending the one which appealed to him most. And this argument did not end that day. Every day it continued. The boys now became rivals in ambition—each modeling his own ideals after those of his particular idol. One day Félix thought he would be a navigator, the next, an explorer. First, Alberto was going to be a soldier, then, a governor. And so it went. But the best thing about it was, that they were both fired with the desire to do something really worth while. They studied hard because they agreed that Columbus and Juan Ponce had had to study a great deal in order to learn all the wonderful things they knew! Sometimes Félix received the better grades, sometimes Alberto; but both boys were always at the head of their class.

Their strong friendship continued. As time went on they did not argue so much about their two ideals; but they often talked seriously of what they were to do in later life. Neither had yet decided except that both wished to undertake and accomplish some noble task. They were in High School now. "Soon we *must* decide, Félix," said Alberto. "It is going to be very hard to choose among the many interesting things that offer. But we must make our two old friends proud of us, whatever we do," he finished, laughing.

Some months afterwards, a strange thing happened—so strange that we could hardly believe it, had not both boys declared it to be true. It was again October twelfth, and once more a night of gorgeous tropical moonlight. The two friends had spent the evening walking about the gay Plaza Colón among the holiday crowd. Félix was picturing in his mind the night of long ago, which he had never forgotten. He had grown to be somewhat literary, like his father, and he now recited to Alberto a poem he had written about Columbus, which ended:

> "Guide us, great man of the Past,
> Till we shall no more blindness know
> And reach thy heights at last."

Alberto thought this quite fine. "I wish I could write a poem about old Juan Ponce," he remarked enviously, upholding as ever his special hero. Finally the two friends said good night.

Then the strange thing occurred.

In the depths of the night, when all the town was sleeping, and only the moon, gliding across the sky, was aware of what took place, the spirits descended from the statues, and after holding long communion, parted once again. . . .

Now Félix, fast asleep, seemed to hear a voice commanding him: "Your heart is filled with ideals, and your soul is fired with ambition. Go forth, young man, with vision in your eyes. Imagine not, because there remain no undiscovered continents, that no new worlds are to be found. Great invisible worlds, yet undreamed by man, lie close about you. The world of science—how countless its opportunities! Electricity! Think, only the outer

edges of that great mystery have been touched! Study, then, experiment, labor and strive, for therein you will find *your* continent, and therein lies *your* opportunity to disclose new wonders for civilization!" And then the voice ceased, and Félix awoke.

Meanwhile Alberto, also sleeping soundly, was likewise visited by a voice. "Hark!" it said, "strong and sturdy one. Rise up with courage! There is no Fountain of Youth, to be sure, but instead there are inconceivable fountains of healing! What science has discovered, let us skillfully put to use! Study, then, labor and persevere, and go among the sick and make them well. That is *your* mission in the world." And then the voice receded, and Alberto awoke. . . .

In the bright sunshine of the morrow, both of these astounded boys could scarcely believe that they had heard such things. They made all haste to meet, each with the news of his thrilling experience trembling upon his lips. "Last night—" they both began, but stopped in utter amazement, realizing in that moment that each had a similar story to tell! Finally, after several attempts, in which both tried to speak at once, they managed to relate what they had heard. Of course they had only *dreamed,* but the miracle was that all their previous indecisions had vanished. Each boy now felt certain that he knew what was to be his career in life, and each bent every effort towards the attainment of his purpose—Alberto to become a great physician, and Félix a brilliant scientist.

And the two statues remain aloof and inscrutable upon their pedestals; the one always pointing, the other with eyes ever fixed, to the *Westward!*

PART II

CARLOS, THE BRAVE CAMINERO

On a certain mountain road in Porto Rico lived a road-mender named Carlos—a small man, quiet and exceedingly polite in his manner. He was very handsome, with a clear, tanned complexion, large brown eyes, small black moustache, and hair always sleek and well trimmed. His clothes were neat and extremely clean, in spite of the fact that he lived alone with no wife to look after him. His dog, Leal, was his only companion. Since the road had but recently been opened, he did not live in a house of red brick and stone like the ones built for *camineros* in Spanish times, but dwelt in a tiny hut of wood with a thatched roof, the sign "CAMINERO" being nailed to a tree in front. It is not, however, the fine house that makes the man, as we shall see.

As soon as the new highway was completed, Carlos arrived in the vicinity and was henceforth responsible for the care of five kilometers of the road. It immediately became evident that he was very conscientious about his duties. He built himself a pushcart, and divided its interior into compartments. Two of these contained crushed stone of different sizes. Another held a large bucket of tar, and a fourth carried a pick and shovel. Early every morning he took his cart and started out to make repairs along his five kilometers. His dog soon

His piece of road consisted almost entirely of sharp curves, and ran along the mountainsides with deep valleys yawning below.

learned to help—running ahead, and barking whenever he found a hole in the road. Carlos was very careful to mend every rough spot, no matter how insignificant. He wanted no accidents on his piece of the road, which consisted almost entirely of sharp curves, and ran along the mountainsides with deep valleys yawning below. In especially dangerous places, Carlos even erected large signs which read in both Spanish and English:

PELIGRO
DANGER

Carlos not only took a great deal of interest in the road itself, but also promptly made the acquaintance of the people who lived along it. They quickly learned that the little *caminero* was their friend. The women admired him because he was dignified, courteous in his remarks, and attentive to the children. The old men, appreciating his application and industry, said that he would get along in the world. The little folks especially adored him and his dog, because he soon formed the habit of escorting them along the perilous road to and from the schoolhouse. They grew to trust Carlos and never ceased singing his praises to their grateful parents.

Carlos could read and write. He even subscribed to newspapers published in San Juan. People first began to come to his humble home in order to ascertain what was going on elsewhere in the world. Soon they understood that this small, unassuming man was very intelligent. Then, because he was the only government employee within many miles, they grew accustomed to seek his advice on various matters, even those concerning their own private

affairs. He gradually became a modest power in this section of the mountain region.

But some of the younger men did not like Carlos. These were idlers, who frequented a little café and store called "El Aguila." In the first place, they were jealous of his superior learning. Then also, they were angry that a stranger should be there as *caminero,* instead of one of their own number being chosen to fill the position. Great, lazy fellows that they were, they would never have applied themselves to any task for long. "This Carlos," said one, scornfully, "has turned the heads of the whole *barrio*. He acts like a girl, with his pretty face and sweet manners!" And he began to strut around in a coarse imitation of Carlos. All the bystanders laughed loudly.

"Poor timid thing," said another. "The world outside was too big for him, so he had to come and hide away in the mountains!"

"Bah!" exclaimed another, "he is a weak coward, spending his time amongst the women and children!"

"Let him try any of his 'wisdom' on me," exclaimed a fourth, excitedly, "and I'll show him who is master in these mountains!" and he waved a great arm, built of brawn and muscle.

Everyone looked at him admiringly. He was the bully of the district, and said to be remarkably brave and strong, though no one had ever seen him in action.

Carlos, busy with his labors, his reading, and his friends did not know of these gross remarks made against him in "El Aguila." One day a little boy ran to him:

"O Don Carlos, the men in 'El Aguila' hate you," he panted in terror. "I heard the big and strong Daniel say that he would like to beat you!"

Carlos smiled, and took the frightened child upon his knee. "Do not worry, Pedrito," he said, "Daniel is only an idle, boasting fellow. I am not afraid. He who performs his duty quietly, and loves his neighbors never comes to any harm. Come now, I shall tell you a story."

But in reality Carlos was disturbed. He resolved to try to make friends with these malicious critics, for he did not like to feel that he had enemies in the community which he now loved so much. Perhaps he could even assist these young men to find work, and thus secure their friendship. But how to do this. He was overly sensitive about his size, and he had tried to make up for his diminutive body, by developing his intellect. This was what had won for him his present position and increasing importance. But he knew that those who loitered about "El Aguila" had little respect for intelligence. He knew that because of his smallness, they despised him as a coward. Finally he decided that if he could only prove to them that he was *not* a coward but a brave man, they would be his friends. But how to do so? They were large and strong; he, small and weak. He must patiently wait for an opportunity when his wits could match their strength in equal contest.

One afternoon Carlos was escorting a group of children home from school, as was his custom. He kept them away from the outer edge of the road where the cliff dropped sheer for nearly five hundred feet. His dog, Leal, aided him in this, as though the children were sheep which must be herded together. It was a happy throng which circled laughing and shouting about the *caminero*.

They rounded a curve in the road, and came upon a

group of the young fellows who were jealous of the road-mender. Among them was the self-elected champion, Daniel. "Ho! Ho!" he shouted, "the *children* are coming! And what child is this, a little bigger than the rest, but not big enough to join in the games of men?"

The face of Carlos grew very red. He did not know how to reply to the taunts of Daniel. His only desire was to make friends, and that certainly could not be accomplished by giving an angry answer. He stopped beside the men, and in his attempt to think of the proper response to make, his face became redder and redder, until in his embarrassment he could not utter a word.

"Look, look!" shouted Daniel, in glee, "the great *caminero* blushes like a girl. 'Good day, my pretty Rosita!" he said with a mocking bow. How all his followers laughed! Even the children laughed, not understanding what was meant. On occasions of this sort, Carlos always tried to think of the great Napoleon, who was also short of stature.

"For shame, *amigos,*" said Daniel, changing to a tone of anger, "that such a miserable person should occupy a place which one of us might fill with dignity. Who is he, I ask you, to set himself up as the advisor and counsellor of the community? Why should *he* turn the heads of all the pretty girls? He is an outsider, an imposter! Down, I say, down with Carlos the coward, Carlos the disgraceful *caminero!*"

What might have happened at that moment will never be known, for scarcely had Daniel finished speaking, when everyone was startled by a shower of dirt and stones which fell upon them. All looked up towards the overhanging cliff in quick apprehension. More dirt and larger

stones rolled down. . . . There was a rumbling noise from far above! Great then was their consternation, for not one of them but knew what *that* meant. A *derrumbamiento!* A landslide! Where to go? Which way to escape? One moment of gasping terror and every man of them set off, running as fast as his legs could carry him, from the impending danger. Every man but the "cowardly" Carlos, the little *caminero.* He alone remained among the terrified children who were too frightened to move and stood screaming helplessly. *"¡Socorro! ¡Socorro!"* he shouted to the fleeing men. But they paid no attention.

"Come! Come!" he cried to the children, pushing them into a little group, urging them out of the thickening shower of dirt. Leal, barking in a frenzy, helped in this rescue. The rumbling noise increased to a roar! Oh, *Virgen Santa,* can he do it? Or will the precious lives of the children be lost under the awful avalanche? His own life? But what matters that if he can but save the children! He has no thought for himself. "On! On!" he cries. Now they see safety ahead. The children, reassured by his directions, are advancing toward the clear open space beyond the slide. It is not, then, the whole mountain tumbling down, but only a section of the recently-cut cliff, which has been undermined by the rains. On! On! Safety for all! And all are safe, God be praised! All! But not quite all . . . where is Carlos, the brave Carlos? Carlos the rescuer, the heroic *caminero?* What crashing noises the great stones make as they fall from above, strike the road and bound off into the valley far below. The highway has already disappeared under a vast and increasing pile of earth and rocks. Even trees, uprooted from far above, come ca-

reening down. It is an impressive sight! But where is Carlos? People come running to the spot. The rescued little ones are huddled together in a place of safety. But what has become of Carlos? They cannot tell. Daniel and the others, who have now come sheepishly back, cannot tell. The landslide is almost over; the noise is subsiding. But Carlos? Sobs and shrieks of women mingle with the shouts of men. Above the tumult, a faint barking is heard. Leal! Leal, the dog of Carlos! They see him near the edge of the mountainous heap of earth and stones—a tiny agitated dog, digging frantically. There is a rush forward. Even Daniel forgets his hatred and cowardice, in his eagerness to help find the brave man. What a breathless agonized suspense hangs over all, as the men begin wildly to toss aside the debris. Only the barking of Leal is heard now. Oh, blessed Virgin, grant that he may not be dead! Let Carlos live so that the grateful people may crown him with their blessings and thanks. Do not let die this courageous man who has saved twelve precious lives today. . . .

A shout! They have found him! A silence . . . he is dead. A great groan arises and every head is bowed. Another shout! He is alive! What a rush forward! What tidings of gladness ring out, echoing far and near among the hills.

There lies Carlos pinned under a huge boulder, his brown eyes full of agony and pain, but greeting his rescuers with a feeble smile. "¡Viva Carlos!" Roll away the stone. Silence! He is trying to speak. Daniel himself it is who leans down to hear those tortured whispered words, *"¿Y los niños?"*

"The children are safe! All safe, thanks to God and

to you, brave Carlos!" says Daniel with a sob in his voice. And the suffering *caminero* knows that at last he has made friends with the entire community. Then, smiling up at the sorrow-stricken face of Daniel, he closed his eyes, and fainted.

Carlos did not die. But it was many weeks before he was again able to look after his beloved five kilometers of *camino*. The government had sent another *caminero* to take his place; but the men would not have him, preferring to do Carlos' work themselves until he could once more do it. And with what a will they went about the task of clearing the road of the debris piled up by the great landslide!

When finally Carlos was again among them, he was the idol of the community. How delighted and proud they were when on a certain glorious day, their distinguished friend, the roadmender, was presented with a beautiful medal as a reward for his bravery. But anyone who wanted to see this medal had to go into the thatched hut to be shown it, for Carlos was much too modest ever to wear it. No longer was he the small and despised Carlos. No; he was Carlos, the Brave *Caminero*. As such he was pointed out to strangers, and the people felt themselves incapable of showing him the respect he deserved. Even Daniel, who had learned a valuable lesson through what had happened, took to lauding the merits of Carlos, and in time became one of his closest friends and admirers.

But all this recognition and praise did not in the least turn the head of this modest *caminero*. For he was as wise as he was good, and so he knew in his heart that the most precious thing he had gained was not the honor and the glory, but the love and esteem of all his fellow-men.

DAMA DE NOCHE

Lady of the Night,
You are somewhere, unseen,
Back among silver-streaked shadows,
Your presence only felt
By the creeping, stealing fragrance
Of your night-black hair,
Of your moon-pale face,
Of your flower-petal garments . . .
A fragrance
Like the memory of children's faith,
Like the essence of a lover's dreams,
Like the star-set hopes of poets . . .
A fragrance
Emanating from an enchanted garden,
Wafted on warm winds
Through the May night,
To astonish my senses
Into a rapture of imaginings.
For although they tell me
You're a flower,
I know
That only the loveliest lady—
Perhaps the fay of Borinquen—
Could possess such alluring, bewildering delights.
So, hidden there
Among the starry jasmine,
Among delicate gardenias—your fair sisters—
Smile on, that subtle smile
Which radiates such fragrant perfume,
Lady of the Night.

THE INHERITANCE

When Eduardo Fernández Tomás died, he left very little money and many debts to his two sons. True, there was the large *finca,* La Margarita, in the neighborhood of Arecibo. But not much had been produced there in recent years, due to the financial reverses and poor health of Don Eduardo. The impoverished estate also included Villa Fortuna, a small ruinous house perched on a cliff-top above the caves and rocks of the seacoast near Quebradillas. This latter property was practically worthless except for its unique location, which afforded a magnificent view of the surrounding country and the broad Atlantic to the north.

The two sons, Julio and Luis, had been recalled from school in Spain, and on this day we find them in a gloomy mood, pacing slowly up and down the narrow rocky beach far below Villa Fortuna. They had come here hopefully, to look over their property, which they had not seen for many years, with a view to selling it, and they had found it in such a sad state of neglect that they were greatly discouraged. They had climbed down to the secluded cove, where they had so often played as boys, in order to talk over the present deplorable condition of their finances. Julio was tall and olive-skinned, with a thin handsome face which now wore a look of extreme impatience. His long hands moved nervously and his dark eyes flashed angrily. Luis was shorter than his brother, and his face

was more round with good nature than actually full. His forehead was broad and kind. He did not seem so impatient as his brother, but there was a worried look in his brown eyes. Back and forth again and again they walked in serious conversation. The surf of the calm blue sea murmured and surged gently among the hundreds of scattered rocks, against which it would rage and pound in a great foaming fury when storm-time came. On the horizon floated soft white clouds like monstrous puffs of cotton against the azure sky. Behind rose the high jagged coral cliffs, honeycombed with grottoes, into some of which flowed the sea at high tide. Lazy gulls circled in the sunlit upper spaces.

"Bah!" exclaimed Julio. "What a disappointment! For Villa Fortuna I do not believe we could get this—or that!" he said, snapping his fingers on either hand.

"A very few *pesos* at the most," agreed Luis, who was more moderate.

"*Pesos!*" scoffed his brother. "You mean a few *centavos!* And I think not even that for such a miserable crow's nest! *¡Dios mío!* Luis, we are destitute—wretched paupers!" and he hid his horrified face in his hands. "Paupers!" he muttered again through his fingers.

"Not quite so bad as that, brother," soothed Luis. "Remember we still have La Margarita."

Julio uncovered his face with a jerk. He looked at his brother in astonishment. "La Margarita!" he exclaimed. "La Margarita! *Ave María,* Luis! I hope you do not count on anything from that place. Why it is nothing but a weed patch! I don't believe we could give it away. No; I repeat, we are paupers! But tell me, why did our father keep us at school in Spain in ignorance of all these

affairs. *¡Dios mío!* It would be bad enough to be an ignorant beggar—but a poverty-stricken gentleman—*jamás!* Think of it, Luis—we, educated to the best there is in life, must be satisfied with nothing! Nothing!" He looked at his long white hands helplessly. "Noth-

A secluded cove on the rocky seacoast near Quebradillas.

ing," he repeated dully, perhaps half realizing how little fitted those hands actually were to do any real work.

"Perhaps La Margarita is of no value simply because it has not been properly cultivated. Maybe we could salvage it, and see it once more a prosperous expanse of fertile cane-fields," suggested Luis, thoughtfully.

"What!" shouted Julio, with an angry gesture. *"We?"*

"Yes, we," answered Luis, smiling dryly. "We have no longer any excuse for being proud you know, dear brother," he added, looking at his own strong white hands, and seeing in them possibilities for honest labor. "Perhaps we have idled long enough in the lap of luxury. Surely some work will not hurt us—not if it's going to

mean our daily bread," he concluded, with a laugh which did not belie his earnestness.

"Oh!" said Julio, "I could die to think of it. When have gentlemen used their hands? Did our father ever use his? No! Even when he realized the approaching failure of La Margarita, he did not use them. No, Luis, I think I should prefer to starve first," he added with a dramatic flourish.

"Well," replied Luis quietly, "it is very grand to speak proudly of starving. But of course we won't have to do that—not yet. You know we still have a little money—*very* little, it is true, but with proper economy it should last us until we get upon our feet."

"Economy!" sneered his foolish brother. "And when has a Fernández practiced economy? I do not know the word, brother! No; I shall take my share of our pittance and seek my fortune bravely, and if I do not soon find it, I shall succumb—but still in my gentleman's clothes!"

"That is very fine, brother," agreed Luis sarcastically, "but the days of treasure trove are past. And besides, what did most of those intrepid *conquistadores* find in the end but a tragic, penniless death? No, no, brother, we must be sane about this. Let us vindicate rather than reproach our poor dead father. Come, Julio, let us return to La Margarita, and there do the best we can towards converting it into our future fortunes."

"Never!!" exclaimed Julio, emphasizing the word with a violent kick in the sand.

Cling! sounded the clear ring of metal against a rock. Both brothers stopped short, their eyes fastening upon something which now bounded back and rolled close to

their feet. With a low cry, Julio quickly stooped and picked up a corroded disc. He stared at it in amazement, turning it over and over. "No!" he exclaimed. "No! No! It cannot be!" He rubbed it against his sleeve. "No! But—but, *Por Dios!* Yes!!"

"What?" inquired Luis excitedly, trying to get a view of the object. "What is it, Julio?"

But Julio was running about wildly. "It is! It is!" he cried. "Don't you see, Luis!" He held it aloft in his joy. "It is a *macuquina!* A doubloon! An *onza!* Oh, I do not know what it is—but it is gold, Luis, gold! Spanish gold! Treasure!"

It was indeed a large and ancient Spanish coin which Julio in his anger had kicked up from the sand. He could not restrain his wild excitement. Luis was excited too, but inclined to be skeptical. "But Julio, you surely don't think this is anything but a stray piece?"

"Stray piece?" shouted his brother. "Heavens, no! Stray? Why I think it is what it is—the sign of treasure —treasure that is here—*here!*" he cried with a sweeping gesture of his arms, which included the sea, rocks, shore, cliffs, caves and sky—everything. "Here! And I shall begin the search for it at once," he added, starting to walk unsteadily and rapidly about, examining the ground.

Luis remained silent, watching him. Finally, after some quiet thought, he spoke. "I do not like to see you disappointed Julio; but I do not—I cannot believe there is any treasure here. Perhaps an odd piece or two, such as has been found on the coasts of the islands of Tortuga, Antigua, Haiti, Jamaica and others. But who has found real treasure? Whom have we heard of, except in story?

No; believe me. A few pieces may have dropped here and there during the course of some game of chance; but the old buccaneers were too greedy for their gold and too careful of its safety ever to leave it behind them—or if one left it, you may be sure another came for it! No; Julio, I think it would only be another foolish search for El Dorado, should we undertake it"—he looked up and down the towering jagged shore line with its many caves —"and I do not believe in our present financial condition we can afford to waste the time."

During this speech, Julio had stopped his fruitless search and was gazing at his brother intently. Now he spoke calmly enough, but one could easily recognize the restrained excitement beneath his words: "Well, brother, if you feel that way about it, I shall make a bargain with you. Return, if you wish, to La Margarita—to days of drudgery and nights of weariness, and if, after wasting your precious youth, you succeed in amassing a fortune, you will be welcome to it. But not I! No; I dream of wealth untold—a ransom for a Midas! But if I find it alone, let me warn you it will be mine! I have told you I should never work! But I would work a short time, even till my hands were bleeding and torn, if I could finally withdraw them streaming with gold—gold!" He repeated the word lovingly, with the light of his conqueror-ancestors flashing in his bold eyes. "So, my cautious brother, I propose that you return to your beloved Margarita, while I remain here and take Villa Fortuna as my share of our munificent inheritance. And Villa *Fortuna* it will be indeed! Are you agreed, brother?"

Luis, after a great deal of further remonstrance, finally was forced to acquiesce, and went his way sadly, leav-

ing this reckless fortune-hunter to what the fates might provide.

Every day from dawn till dark, Julio hunted feverishly for treasure. He lived alone at Villa Fortuna and engaged no one to help him, because he had a miserly wish not to share any of his gold. His handsome figure became dishevelled and ragged. No longer did he look like a fine gentleman. "Never mind," he said, peering at himself one day in a cracked mirror, "soon I shall look handsomer than ever with the princely clothes I shall buy." And he took his pick and shovel preparatory to the long tedious descent to the shore.

Undoubtedly, at some remote day, pirates had landed in the little cove, bringing with them their hard-fought treasure. Often Julio visualized those rough brigands as they must have appeared, clambering out of their sturdy boats to the shelter of the rocky shore. Sometimes he tried to conjecture what purpose had brought them hither. But really he did not care very much, for he was finding just enough gold to spur him on to ever greater efforts. Indeed, in the course of the first year, by prodigious labor, he unearthed twelve old coins of various denominations.

On the first day of the new year, he uncovered his thirteenth piece—but this time it was not gold. It was a human skull! And from that day on he found not so much as a single copper *centavo*. Country people, catching an occasional glimpse of him, went fearfully on their way, deeming him a hopeless lunatic.

So time passed.

Diligence and perseverance in the right direction seldom go unrewarded. Miles away upon his weed-grown

finca toiled the new sugar-planter, and great were his discouragements. But Porto Rico is a fertile, smiling land which cannot long withhold her bounty from her faithful sons. Slowly Luis succeeded, never assuming once that his hands were being more than temporarily soiled by labor. But the debts of the estate were many, and sugar-cane must take its allotted time to grow. Current expenses mount terrifyingly. Bright as is Borinquen's sun, Luis spent many a dark hour under it—but many a happy hour too, and an exceedingly joyful one on that day when at last he stood on a hillside looking down upon his beautiful fields of ripening cane, its lovely flowers—the *guajanas*—spreading as far as the eye could reach, like a vast billowing gossamer sea. This was the crop that would pay the final debts—perhaps even the first profits. And this was the end of the seventh year.

Soon thereafter we find Luis again at Villa Fortuna. It is a gray, chilly day, and he could not descend to the little cove below, even if he would, so terribly is the angry sea churning and seething amongst the black rocks and somber caverns. But Luis does not wish to go down to that place of strange memory. No, he has come to hang a wreath on the cross which marks a solitary grave, high on the cliff-top where it is swept bare of grass by those same mighty winds that filled the sails of the galleons which bore the brave *conquistadores* towards El Dorado!

O pitiable strong men of the ages, whose eyes have been blinded by the glitter of gold! O wise strong men of the ages, who in calmer vision have foreseen wealth and happiness in the harvests to be yielded from the fruitful earth!

DOLORES

Dolores was the best and bravest sister in the world! Both of her brothers agreed to that.

At the time our story begins, these three orphans, Dolores, Guillermo and Juanito, lived in a small house in Río Piedras. Juanito, a merry little boy of seven years, was in the second grade at school. Guillermo, who was an ambitious young man, worked in the Government Experiment Station just outside the town. All day long he labored diligently at his many duties. He spaded the ground, and hoed and weeded the beds of growing plants. He cleaned the barns, and fed the prize government cattle and horses that were kept there. Guillermo had not had much education, but he was anxious to learn. He loved all the plants, and tried to memorize the difficult Latin names which were printed on tags tied to them. Especially was he interested in the experimentation with sugar-cane, coffee, fruit and tobacco. These were the four most important agricultural products of his beloved island. He was eager that better and better varieties might be developed so as to increase the prosperity of the country. His greatest care was for the frail tobacco plants with their wide green leaves and delicate pink flowers. When an especially fine specimen was produced, he was proud of it in the way that a father is proud of his child. The head of the Experiment Station was very pleased with the efforts and interest of Guillermo.

The third member of the little family was sister Dolores who was two years older than Guillermo. Dolores was not a beautiful girl, but she was tall, strong and healthy. Her hands were always ready to do a good deed for some one, and her large brown eyes were forever smiling. Dolores kept the wee home in order. She cooked, washed and sewed for her two brothers. She was so energetic that she had actually painted the whole house inside and out. She tended their small vegetable garden, which Guillermo kept supplied with a variety of plants from the Experiment Station, but her special pride was the front yard. Here she had a number of flourishing rosebushes, and on either side of the doorway grew a tall, spiny *yucca* plant, every single point of which boasted a clean white egg-shell! It had taken Dolores several years to ornament both those plants with perfect shells. How carefully the contents of every egg used in the little house had had to be extracted!

Even though they were quite poor, Dolores, Guillermo and Juanito were happy and contented. All was well with them until Guillermo became ill. He grew thin and pale, and felt tired all of the time. Some days he was very feverish. He did not dare stop working, because his income supported the family. Finally, however, Dolores insisted that he should see a doctor. She and Juanito waited fearfully at home until he returned.

When he entered the house, the look on his face told them the worst. It was a very dreadful disease with which he was threatened, and the doctor had told him that he must not work any more at all. Unfortunately the great free sanatorium near Río Piedras was already full of patients. The doctor had said that he must go to the

mountains where he could rest and drink fresh milk, and eat nourishing foods.

"Oh, Dolores," cried Guillermo in despair, "whatever *will* become of us now? I *cannot* stop working—that is all there is to it! We would starve!"

"What must be done, must be done," said kind Dolores. Then she comforted him in her motherly way, until he grew more hopeful. But her heart was very heavy within her.

Every day a large *guagua* ran past their house on its way to Ponce over the *Carretera Central.* When Sunday came, Dolores commanded Guillermo to rest, and Juanito to stay near him. Then she got into the bus. She said she was going to the mountains to look for a home for them. Brave Dolores!

She rode over the winding highway, through Caguas in its fertile valley, and on, around tortuous curves, towards Cayey. Past the great naval radio station and army barracks they rolled, and entered the mountain town, which lies in the heart of Porto Rico's tobacco district. Dolores had never been in the mountains before. She thought them so marvellous and sublime that she began to feel happy to think that she and her two brothers were obliged to go away from the noisy city to live in this paradise. Wise Dolores! She did not spend her day worrying *how* they were going to accomplish that. She enjoyed the beautiful scenery, kept her eyes open, and trusted in God.

Away from Cayey they sped, along the amazing road which is hewn out of the solid rock of the mountainsides. Dolores observed the country with keen interest, because she knew her brother's enthusiasm for the growing of

tobacco. The fields were all laid out like patchwork patterns on the hillsides. There were square fields, triangular fields, fields of all shapes and dimensions—made to fit into the irregular landscape like pieces in a giant agricultural puzzle. Up to the very tops of the hills, these cultivated lands stretched like eager clutching fingers. Some of them were bare, some a solid green, others were ribbed with the first shoots of the new plants, and still others presented row after row of the half-grown tobacco, while, strangest of all to Dolores, were the ones which were covered entirely with white cheesecloth, looking like Alpine snow-fields! Below, she could see many large, oblong buildings—some of them made of white-painted wood, and others of palm-thatch. These were the drying-sheds for the tobacco. And all over the countryside were scattered innumerable tiny houses—the homes of the workers in the tobacco fields. Surely one of these houses must be for her brothers and her! With sudden decision Dolores got out of the *guagua*.

It would be too long a story to tell how she found the small deserted hut on the very top of a hill too steep for cultivation; or of how she told her story to the overseer of the tobacco plantation, and received permission to move into it. However, she accomplished all this and came home very fatigued, but filled with satisfaction. Her brothers were not surprised. They had long thought that their capable sister could do anything.

So, soon thereafter they went to live in the house on the hilltop where, as Juanito said, they had "the whole world for a dooryard." Dolores smiled at this, but she had a moment of deep regret as she remembered the beloved, cosy dooryard in Río Piedras with its blooming

rose-trees and the two remarkable plants adorned with egg-shells. She had two men carry Guillermo up the precipitous ascent. "And here you are going to stay," she said to him, "until you are so strong and well that you can *run* down the hillside all by yourself!"

Juan said they had "the whole world for a dooryard."

She and Juanito helped bring up their modest furniture, and then she hired a man who brought several loads of palm-thatch on his head, with which Dolores mended the small house and made it livable. There were two or three rather stunted trees and some bushes near the house. In no time at all Dolores had Juanito clear the ground about the entrance. She then planted a few flower seeds which Guillermo had given her. No matter where Dolores was, she soon made the place seem homelike. Guillermo declared that he already felt better. He sat outside breathing deep breaths of the refreshing mountain air, while his practiced eyes feasted on the prospect of the vast cultivated valley below. At last he was in

the very midst of hundreds and hundreds of acres of tobacco! How he longed to go down and examine it closely; but he must be patient.

Now that they were safely settled, they must eat. And it was Dolores who had provided for that also. She had secured work in a tobacco factory in Cayey. It meant that she must walk several kilometers each day. But she insisted that she did not mind. With her usual cleverness, she soon grew to be a very expert cigar-maker.

As soon as Dolores could afford it, she bought a cow so that Guillermo might have fresh milk. She led the cow home and then called her brothers out to look at it. Juanito suddenly began to laugh loudly.

"What's the matter, Juanito?" asked Dolores.

"Oh! Oh!" shouted Juanito. "Look at it, Dolores! Why, it's a *perpendicular* cow!"

The cow was browsing on the abrupt hillside. Its front legs were firmly planted, and it was facing downward toward the valley. It seemed almost to be standing on its head.

"It's a true mountain cow," said Guillermo, "comfortable in any position!"

"If you two make fun of my cow," declared Dolores, pretending to be hurt, "I shall tell her, and she will not give you any milk. You will see! She is really a very intelligent cow even though she does stand on her head a great deal!"

Next Dolores bought some chickens, so that Guillermo might have fresh eggs. He began to look and feel much stronger.

Guillermo and Juanito were very busy during the long hours that Dolores was away. For Guillermo was

growing tobacco! That is, Juanito was doing most of the work and Guillermo was directing him. As we have said before, Guillermo had always liked to experiment with tobacco. When he left the Station at Río Piedras, he brought many choice seeds with him. Living in the heart of the tobacco country stirred his interest more than ever. His vista showed him that many hills were entirely covered with tobacco plants. Why not try a little cultivation on his own hill? True, its sides were too steep; but behind the house it jutted out, forming a small plateau. It was here that Guillermo located his tobacco field. Dolores bought some fertilizer and cheesecloth for him. She did not believe he could raise very much tobacco there, but she wanted him to be contented and happy, so that his health would improve faster. Juanito prepared the ground under his brother's supervision. But Guillermo himself planted the seeds carefully and lovingly. Rains fell in abundance that year. The delicate green plants soon pushed through the properly fertilized soil. Guillermo tended each one like a child. The tobacco grew and thrived. And Guillermo thrived also, for the invigorating air, fresh milk and mild exercise were doing wonders for him.

The three orphans were optimistic and happy. They all took a lively interest in Guillermo's "plantation." "You'll be a rich planter yet," said Dolores. "Why, there is a man in Cayey who was quite ill last week, and confined to his bed. He is a tobacco-grower. He had expected the buyers to pay him thirty-five dollars a hundred pounds for his tobacco. But when the buyers arrived from the United States, they offered him forty-five dollars. The man immediately arose from bed and went

forth into the streets, a well man! So you see what is going to happen to you, Guillermo! Someone will surely come and offer you a fortune for your tobacco, and then you will at once recover!"

When Guillermo's tobacco crop was ready, Juanito helped him harvest it. On one side of the house they had built an extension and thatched it with *yaguas* of the royal palm. Here they hung their tobacco to dry. In these days all was hopeful on the hilltop.

Then came disaster. The small factory where Dolores was employed, was purchased by a large San Juan company which was trying to secure a monopoly of the tobacco business. They closed the factory, wishing to centralize the work of their operatives in San Juan.

Dolores was without occupation. She tried desperately to find something else to do, but she was only a stranger in the community. What few positions there were, were given to women better known.

That night there was consternation and gloom among the little trio. Finally Dolores told her brothers to go to sleep, and that she would try to think of something by morning. So firm was their trust in Dolores that they actually *did* sleep, while she remained awake and faced hardship—perhaps starvation! It was very quiet there in the night, except for the friendly song of a tiny *coquí* somewhere in the darkness outside. The house was pervaded by the pleasant aroma of Guillermo's drying tobacco. All of a sudden Dolores knew what she would do; and then she slept.

The next day she began to make cigars from her brother's tobacco. Into each cigar she put as much care as he had given each plant. The tobacco was of excellent

quality. Every leaf was perfect. It had fermented and dried just enough. Dolores knew how to soften and prepare the leaves. When she had finished a cigar, it was a masterpiece. The most fastidious gentleman might have dreamed delightfully after his dinner, while smoking one of Dolores' cigars!

Now Dolores knew that it was unlawful to traffic in tobacco without a government license; but in desperation, she had decided to take the risk, if she could only find a place to sell her cigars. The little money she had was very nearly gone.

She went down to Cayey to see if she could dispose of her product. There she heard that a rich tobacco manufacturer from San Juan was going to give a grand *lechón asado* at his mountain home near the town. Many men prominent in the tobacco industry would be there and even some big buyers from the United States were coming. In all, two or three hundred people were going to attend. There would be speeches, music and games.

Dolores concluded what she would do. She made some purchases in Cayey and, putting them all into an enormous flat basket she had bought, she lifted it to her head and made her way swiftly home. When she told her plan to her brothers, they wondered at her daring. Then all three set to work to wrap the choicest cigars carefully in tinfoil which Dolores had purchased.

On the great day of the *fiesta,* Señor Castillo, the host, was extremely surprised to discover a tall, handsome girl, in a dress the color of the green tobacco, circulating among his distinguished guests, selling them something out of a huge basket. He became annoyed. "Who is that

peddling here?" he asked a policeman. "Why, it is an insult to my guests to have anything *sold* to them."

"She has been here for nearly two hours, señor," answered the policeman respectfully. "I supposed you had asked her to come as a special attraction. I will speak to her immediately."

"Señorita, do you not know that you should not be selling anything here?" asked the policeman. "Señor Castillo is very angry. You must leave at once. What do you have there, anyway?" He picked up one of the disguised cigars and unwrapped it. "Cigars!" he exclaimed. "Where did they come from?"

"I made them," replied Dolores in a low voice.

"*You* made them? And who gave you permission to *sell* them?"

"No one! But oh señor, my brother is so ill and I needed the money. Please——"

"That is enough!" interrupted the policeman. "You should have known better! You must come with me at once!" And he led poor Dolores away—not so much because he really wanted to arrest the girl, but because it was his duty to do so.

So Dolores sat in the police station, full of bitterness against the cruel world.

In the meantime the sumptuous pig-roast was over. The guests had eaten all they could, and it was time to smoke. Señor Castillo ordered that cigars be passed around. Some of the men smoked his cigars. Others put them into their pockets and smoked instead the tinfoil-wrapped ones they had bought from the attractive girl. These men at first looked surprised, and then delighted. "What remarkable cigars! What a delicious

aroma!" Señor Castillo was to be congratulated. They congratulated him. And when he asked them the reason for their felicitations, they said: "For these extraordinary cigars, of course." And then an animated discussion arose among the learned tobacco experts. Their enthusiasm was unlimited. Never had they smoked better cigars. Señor Castillo was amazed. "Where is that girl who sold them?" they asked. Their host could not tell. He did not even know that she had been selling cigars. Where did she get them anyhow?

He called the policeman. "Where is that girl who was selling cigars?" he inquired.

"In the *cuartel,* señor!" replied the policeman, proudly.

"Cuartel!" exclaimed some of the listeners in amazement. "In the *cuartel!* The girl who sold these divine cigars? Impossible!"

"In the *cuartel!"* echoed Señor Castillo, taking his cue from his guests. "And *why* is she there?" he demanded sternly.

"She—she had no license," stammered the policeman.

Dolores had not been surprised when she was taken to the police station. She had half-expected it. But she was certainly astonished when she was so soon brought back again by the same policeman, who was now as polite as he had been severe before. He led her into the presence of the tobacco men. They questioned her. Then she became very frightened, and, breaking down, told her whole pitiful story.

"Do not weep," said one of the men when she had finished. "If your brother can raise such tobacco and you can make such excellent cigars, neither of you will ever have further cause for worry!"

Now when Juanito and Guillermo looked down the hill and saw Dolores approaching with a policeman, and followed by a number of men, they were terrified. Guillermo's first thought was for his sister. He began to run down the hillside. He felt very strong. He went faster. Dolores, seeing him coming, stopped wonderstruck. Then, with a wild, joyous cry, she ran forward to meet him. "O Guillermo! You are well! You are well! You have run down the hill unaided and you are cured!"

At last she turned to the smiling men and said: "This is my brother Guillermo, who raised the special quality of tobacco from which my cigars are made." So everyone had words of praise for the timid and astonished young man, and then all went up to inspect with expert eyes the little plantation on the hilltop. They found it flourishing indeed, with its new crop of tender young plants. Dolores passed her tempting cigars to the entire company.

"What do you call these cigars?" asked one man.

"Why, I don't know—" hesitated Dolores, who had never thought of that.

"I know," laughed a very wealthy visitor from the United States, when someone had interpreted the question for him. "They should be called 'Sublimities' because it surely is a heavenly experience to smoke one of them!"

So now Juanito is in school and has reached the seventh grade. Dolores is overseer of an important department in the huge tobacco factory of San Juan where all day long, skilled women roll the famous "Sublimity" cigar which brings such an exceptional price in the market. All of this brand of cigars are made from a very special kind of tobacco which is shipped in from Cayey. And the

seeds for the first crop of it were gathered from a lonely hilltop! So you have probably guessed that the present manager of this thriving plantation is none other than Guillermo, entirely restored to health and happiness!

Thus you understand why Juanito and Guillermo always declare that "Dolores is the best and bravest sister in the world!"

BORINQUEN

(A SONG)

Borinquen,

If ever I were caught
  By four gray walls,
I think I should not mind;

If all day I had naught
  To do but stare,
I would not blankness find;

If endless silence wrought
  Its ghastly chain,
It could not me entwine . . .

For thy blue-sparkling days,
  Thy moon-bright nights,
And gentle seas I've known;

I've heard when soft wind plays,
  Through thy tall palms,
A music of its own.

And there's a strange sweet haze
  Pervading me—
Thy light in me hath shone.

Blank walls appall me not,
  Nor silent years
Oppress. I am of thee,

Borinquen.

"HOMBRE DE ORO"

Ramón was twelve years old when his father bought Chombo. He never forgot that night.

In their isolated mountain home he and his mother were waiting. The candle-flame flickered and weird shadows ran up and down the walls, for an approaching storm made the wind blow strongly. His mother was very worried, because his father was so late. Suddenly they heard the wheels of his cart. Before they could open the door he called loudly to them. Ramón ran outside followed by his mother who had paused to light a lantern.

"Come, come," shouted the father, "and see what I have here."

Ramón's mother held the lantern high. And there upon some straw in the cart lay a beautiful colt only about three days old. It blinked its soft brown eyes, startled by the flare of light. Then it uttered a faint wailing cry, which went so straight to Ramón's heart that henceforth he loved the little animal as he would have loved a brother.

"Father," he cried, "where did you get him? Oh, what a pretty little fellow!"

"It is strange, the way I obtained him," answered his father, "but the story must wait. We have to feed him some warm milk at once, and prepare him a comfortable bed away from the storm. He is very weak and young, as you see. In fact, I doubt if he will live at all."

"O father, he must not die," protested Ramón. "I shall care for him. I will do anything; only, please don't let him die!"

"Well, we shall do our best," reassured his father.

Then, after the helpless colt, which Ramón promptly named "Chombo," was safe for the night, the father told them how he had found it.

"As I was coming home from the coffee ranch," he said, "I thought I would take a short cut over the mountain, because I was afraid there might be a storm. I passed near a dense grove of trees, and suddenly two wicked-looking men appeared. I wanted to run, but I had my cart, and it was hard enough even to walk. One of the men said, 'We want to sell you a colt.' 'But I do not want to buy a colt, señor,' I replied much surprised at their offer. 'Oh I am sure that you do,' he insisted with an evil laugh. At that moment I noticed that they both carried long knives. 'The colt is very cheap,' they said. 'Only three dollars!' Of course for a long time I have been wanting to purchase a saddle-horse to ride to market. I thought then that it might be a better idea to buy a colt and raise it myself. It would be so much more economical. I told them to show me their colt. They led the way into the thicket. A small camp-fire was burning and near it on an old blanket lay a magnificent mare. Beside the animal stood a tiny foal which could scarcely bear its weight on its thin little legs. 'But that colt is too young,' I protested. 'Nevertheless it is for sale,' said the men. I could see that for some reason they were anxious to sell it, so I said: 'This colt is so young that a great deal of care will be needed to raise it, and very likely it will die anyway; therefore I will only give one

dollar and a half for it.' Then I could see that they were angry, so I went on: 'If you are so eager to *get rid* of the colt, why don't you give it away?' They both looked taken aback at that. 'Who said we were eager to get

"For a long time I have been wanting to purchase a saddle-horse to ride to market."

rid of it?' muttered one of them. Then they whispered together while I regarded them suspiciously. 'Very well,' they finally agreed in a more friendly tone, 'you may have him for a dollar and a half. But you are getting a great bargain.' So I came away with the colt, while its poor mother whinnied weakly. Was that not a strange experience? Those men were certainly very anxious to secure some money."

But Ramón's father had no way of knowing that the two men were thieves.

The wee creature became Ramón's special pet and care. He fed it milk from a bottle. Sometimes it seemed that it would die. But Ramón's love and patience proved

stronger than death, and Chombo soon grew into a sportive, healthy colt romping over the hillsides. He was the constant pet and companion of Ramón, the lonely mountain lad.

The more Chombo developed, the more it became evident that he was no ordinary horse. Although he had never been groomed, his long shaggy hair was the color of gold. His strong muscles rippled beautifully under his thick coat. He was very gay and high-spirited, and scarcely allowed anyone to come near him except his young master. Ramón's father was disgusted. "Of what use is such an animal?" he demanded. "I buy him to ride decently to market, and he jumps over a fence at the first touch of a saddle-bag! He is a good-for-nothing! Does he not realize that he is a grown horse at last, and so should have some dignity? Or is he always going to frolic like a silly colt? I shall have to sell him!"

"Oh no! No, father!" cried Ramón. "I could not live without Chombo. You do not understand him. See how he comes to me—so peacefully. And he is so willing to carry me around. Surely he will be very useful some day. He is just playful and frisky—dear, beautiful Chombo!"

"Beauty is not everything," declared the father. "Have I fed him for three years that he should leap over fences at the first mention of duty? Bah!"

Very soon Ramón's father was going to be sorry that he had ever uttered any such unkind words against Chombo. For one day he had a bad fall down the mountain slope. Ramón leaped to the back of Chombo and raced for the nearest doctor at Villalba. On the smooth

highway Chombo ran swiftly and evenly. Ramón had never imagined him capable of so much speed. His every movement was as coördinated as the motions of a machine. On and on raced the wonderful young horse, showing his true metal at his very first opportunity. Had Ramón not been so terrified about his father, he would have felt only pure joy at this exhilarating experience.

He soon arrived in Villalba and informed the doctor who drove rapidly away in his automobile to aid the injured father. Then he decided to let Chombo have a much deserved rest. Ramón had learned to read in a little mountain school. Everywhere about Villalba he saw large printed signs announcing the opening of a new *Hipódromo* in Ponce. He had never seen a horse race, but suddenly it occurred to him that if Chombo always ran as fast as he had that day he could outrun any horse.

This was the idea which grew stronger and stronger in his mind during the weeks that followed. As soon as his father was convalescent, Ramón asked him if he might take Chombo to Ponce and enter the races. His father only laughed at him. "What? That clown for a race horse? Ho! Ho! You are a very ignorant boy, Ramón."

But soon there was only a little money left in the house. Then Ramón's father who was still too feeble to work, considered the matter more seriously. Finally, very early one Saturday morning long before the sun was up, Ramón started on the journey down to Ponce.

Several tedious hot hours went by before he finally arrived. When he came into the stable yard at the *Hipódromo,* he was amazed at the number and beauty of the horses. Some men caught sight of him and began to

laugh. Ramón rode up to them and said timidly: "I should like to enter my horse in the races. Will you please tell me where I can find the manager?"

At this the men laughed all the more. Ramón climbed off Chombo's back. Truly the poor animal was a sorry sight. The long journey had tired him so that his proud head hung down dejectedly. His flanks were wet with perspiration; and this, with his long shaggy hair, and crude home-made saddle, gave him a most countrified and grotesque appearance.

"He has come many miles and he is weary now," apologized Ramón. "But *señores,* I assure you that he can *really* run very fast."

Something of the confidence in the boy's brave little speech made one or two of the men stop laughing. "So you want to enter him in the races?" asked one of them. "Well then, I am the manager. And where is your jockey?"

Ramón looked blank. He was so ignorant concerning the racing sport that he had never even heard of a jockey.

"I mean, who is going to *ride* your horse?" explained the manager, while all the others laughed again.

"Why *I* am," stated Ramón simply.

"Well, it certainly is not customary for the owner to ride his own horse," said the other, after thinking a moment; "but you look to be nearly the right size. And what about your suit?"

Poor Ramón! It was a good thing that he was so little informed, or he would never have dared even to start on such an adventure. "Why I have *this* suit," he said in surprise, pointing to the faded clothes he wore. The men chuckled again.

Finally, however, they put Ramón on the scales, and declared that he was of correct weight. I'll let them enter," confided the jocular manager to his friends. "A little comedy always pleases the public." Then turning to Ramón again, he asked: "And what name shall we call your horse?"

Ramón remembered some of the fancy names he had seen on the posters at Villalba. "Chombo" would never do. He looked at the perspiring animal. He could recall other days when the silky hair had shone in the sun. *"Hombre de Oro,"* he replied with inspiration. How amused the bystanders all were. Stupid fellows! They could not see the great splendid animal beneath Chombo's present unpleasing exterior. That night Ramón and Chombo went into a field outside the town. Chombo, who was accustomed to spend all his time in the open air, munched grass, and Ramón ate some bread and *dulce* he had brought with him. He was quite happy, thinking constantly of Chombo's remarkable racing power. He still believed that Chombo could win against any horse in the world. So he passed the night tranquilly, reassured by his faith in his pet, and never imagining what was in store for him the next day.

An audience at the races is always interested when a new horse appears on the program. *"Hombre de Oro"* was a very attractive name, and every one waited anxiously to see him.

But now Ramón was not at all eager to come before any audience with Chombo, for he had just arrived in the paddock and seen the other jockeys in their fine silk uniforms of gaudy colors. He himself did not even have a suitable cap to wear. All the other horses were so beau-

tifully groomed that they shone like satin. Chombo was as countrified as ever. But his actions were very different from the previous day's. He was stepping gaily and lightly like the rest—only when Chombo performed he looked funny instead of impressive, because of his uncouth appearance. Ramón, his face burning with embarrassment, could never have remained there had his faith in Chombo not been so strong. Little did he realize that he was playing the part of a clown, that his horse was not considered seriously at all, and that he had only been allowed to enter for the purpose of *amusing* the patrons of the new *Hipódromo*. He did not know that it was against the rules for such a shabby horse and jockey to run. Nor did he dream that he would probably never be allowed to race again. He remained in a corner, quietly enduring the jests and taunts which were flung his way.

Soon the time came to enter the race track. In pranced *"Hombre de Oro"* among the others. He, at least, was oblivious of appearances, and was enjoying himself extremely. The audience first stared unbelievingly, then gasped, and finally shouted its derisive delight: *"Hombre de Oro! Hombre de Oro! Viva! Jíbaro de Oro!"*

Poor Ramón! His honest face was full of dismay. Oh why had he not remained in the mountains? Why had he not guessed how it would be? But it was too late to turn back now. In any case his beloved Chombo would soon display his prowess and then he would be able to ride proudly home with relief for his family.

With great difficulty did he get the excited Chombo in line with the other horses. Finally all was ready—there was a moment of silent expectancy—and then came the well-known signal for all trained race horses to start

at once around the track. The starter shouted: *"¡Ahora!"* Up went the gate, and they were off!

But it was no signal for poor inexperienced Chombo. The sudden roar which went up from the crowd only served to shatter his already high-strung nerves and scare him half to death. He gave one leap into the air, stood quite erect on his hind legs, almost unseating Ramón, and then, coming to earth, he was off with his accustomed speed—off with the amazing swift motion that had so astonished Ramón on the mountain road. But alas! *He was running in the wrong direction!* Instead of following the others he had wheeled entirely around and was going the opposite way for dear life, amidst yells of delight from an audience which had never before been so amused at someone else's expense. Then indeed was Ramón humiliated. He tried to halt the terrified horse, but to no avail. On they sped, meeting the other riders on the far side of the track. Oh! if he could only stop Chombo before they reached the grandstand again. But there was no staying Chombo. Right past the crowded pavilion he flew, urged to greater and greater speed by the howls and shouts sent after him.

Then Ramón managed to steer him through the open gate into the paddock. The poor boy was almost crying with disappointment. Two or three people turned to scoff at him. Then, as he sat dejected and disconsolate on the panting, steaming animal, an elderly man approached. Ramón was instantly on the defensive, expecting further insults. Thus he was much surprised when the man began to speak to him kindly and sympathetically.

"I saw the race, *hijito mío,*" he said, "and I am very

sorry for you. It was cruel of them to let you do it. Quite evidently your horse has not been trained for the track. I have often seen a new horse do just such queer things. But, my boy, your horse can run! *Caracoles,* how he can run!"

At this Ramón attempted a feeble smile. Here at last was an intelligent person, able to see real worth beneath adverse appearances.

"If those foolish people in the grandstand," the old man continued, "had been more observant, they would have seen that your horse met the others when they were *scarce halfway around!* But they were too busy making fun of a poor lad to use their wits."

"Oh, señor, I thank you," said Ramón. "*I* know that my horse can run though no one else seems to think so, except you. Why, you would not believe it if I told you how fast he really can go—like an arrow! I can't imagine what happened to him!"

"It's experience that he needs, my boy," said the old man. "Now let me tell you something. You stay with me this week and I will show you how to train him. We will exercise him every day. I am sure that you have the material for a real race horse there, and I am seldom mistaken. I have been in this game for many years!" He patted Chombo kindly, and for a wonder the sensitive creature did not start away from his practiced touch.

"Oh, thank you. I would like nothing better," faltered Ramón, "but I have no money."

"Don't worry about that. It would be a shame to let such an opportunity as this go by for lack of a few dollars. You can repay me when you are rich."

"Rich?" breathed Ramón. "Rich? Why *señor,* you don't think——"

"I don't *know,*" laughed the other. "Perhaps it's even too early to think. But this is a very fine animal. With a bit of grooming he would be as handsome as any of the thoroughbreds. Where did you come from and where did you get this horse?"

Then Ramón told him the history of Chombo.

The old man listened very attentively. Suddenly a look of amazement spread over his face. He asked the boy a few rapid questions—the exact date, the description of the men, and so on. Finally he exclaimed: "Incredible! It cannot be!!"

He questioned Ramón further. Still he seemed unconvinced, and yet convinced in spite of himself. "I cannot be sure," he said at last, "but your entire account tallies exactly with the story of the disappearance of a very famous race horse named *'Ana Carina.'* You see, she was stolen. The two men were captured later; but the poor mare was in such a weak state that she died. Then the criminals confessed that she had had a colt which they had sold instead of killing because they had needed the money. No trace of the colt could ever be found. But I believe he has been found at last! Oh, my boy, if this is so, you are the possessor of a horse in whose veins runs the best racing blood in Porto Rico! I knew *'Ana Carina'* well. The color of *'Hombre de Oro'* is the same, and this star on his left shoulder is identical. Oh, it is too good to be true!" The old man was fairly quivering with delight over his remarkable discovery. "You were right, my boy, when you brought

this fellow to the races. For if he is the horse I think he is, he surely *can* run!"

Ramón listened in utter astonishment to this revelation which sounded like a fairy tale. Then, speechless with joy, he reached down and fondly put both arms around the neck of his beloved pet.

All week they trained *"Hombre de Oro,"* maintaining the strictest secrecy. The old man had persuaded the Racing Commission to permit *"Hombre de Oro"* to run again. "Let the public laugh once more," he argued. ("They may laugh," he confided to Ramón, "but I'm thinking it will be a very different kind of laughter from last Sunday's.")

Very early in the mornings and late in the evenings they trained at the race track.

Ramón's friend, whose name was Bartolomé, was soon as enthusiastic as the young boy over the surprising speed and strength of *"Hombre de Oro."* During the day Ramón sometimes rode Chombo around the track with other horses, so that he might become accustomed to racing with them. But since he never allowed Chombo to go very fast, and since his coat and his horse's too were as poor and unkempt as ever, the other jockeys laughed at him and made jokes about him. They thought they knew a fine secret: that Ramón was unconsciously acting the clown for their amusement. But Ramón stood their teasing silently, because he too had a secret and a very wonderful one.

Don Bartolomé bought somewhere a second-hand jockey suit of purple satin for Ramón, and he gave the boy a saddle for his horse. Then early Sunday morn-

ing they began the agreeable task of beautifying Chombo. He was a splendid subject for the arts of old Bartolomé, who had groomed many a fine horse in his day. Chombo emerged from all the washing and currying and brushing and oiling a veritable "Man of Gold." Never again could such a resplendent shining creature answer to the humble name of Chombo. And when Ramón in his handsome purple suit had mounted the spirited animal, Bartolomé cried out with admiration, declaring that his old eyes had never beheld a more regal picture—a symphony in purple and gold!

That Sunday the people laughed again when they saw that *"Hombre de Oro"* was still upon the program. They were prepared to enjoy themselves hugely. But you can be sure no one bet on *"Hombre de Oro"*—that is, no one except an old man, who had quietly placed a modest sum against terrific odds.

Ramón postponed riding into the stable-yard until the last possible moment. Then, at a sign from Bartolomé, he appeared among the jockeys. No one recognized him. They looked at the grand spectacle in great curiosity. What celestial creature was this? Then some one noticed the number—and it was the number of *"Hombre de Oro!"* They recognized Ramón's face under the new cap! But before their dazed senses could comprehend the miracle, there came the signal to enter the track.

And the public which was prepared to laugh, marvelled instead. There was not an entrant in the race so handsome or so noble as the despised *jíbaro*—*"Hombre de Oro!"* ("And why should he not be an extraordinary horse—this son of the great *'Ana Carina'?"* thought old Bartolomé.) Up and down paced the graceful animal.

Ramón had heard the ripple of surprise which ran among the spectators. The rhythmic sounds of the band fell like music from heaven on his happy ears as it played one of the popular Porto Rican *danzas*. There was no more derision.

And it was too late for anyone to place a bet on this new horse!

Then came the race—the wild, brief contest for fame, recognition, money! There was no turning backward this time. Instead, *"Hombre de Oro"* easily led them all, running with long free strides. Oh! It is impossible to describe those moments and all the accompanying enthusiasm! You who have seen a superb horse of *pura sangre* run a winning race, know that thrill. The people who had not bet went wild with admiration; those who *had* went wild in another way, as they saw their favorites being left behind.

It was amid the highest excitement yet displayed in the new *Hipódromo* that *"Hombre de Oro"* sped "like an arrow" past the judges' stand to victory!

And so let us end this story, at the point where we have Ramón's faith in his pet horse rewarded against almost overwhelming odds. If you *know* you are *right* in this world—*always* go ahead no matter what the opposition, for thus you will succeed and accomplish your purpose.

GOLDEN FRUIT

(*A Modern Fairy Tale*)

Ever since the days when Hercules went to fetch three golden apples from the Garden of Hesperides, there has clung a glamour of romance around the production of golden fruit. . . .

In northern Porto Rico there are thousands of acres planted with orange and grapefruit trees. In season, large cargoes of luscious fruit are sent away each week on ships bound for New York and elsewhere. Great numbers of men are employed in the growing, cultivating, picking, packing, shipping and selling of this golden product.

In Porto Rico, citrus fruit ranks very high in economic importance. And in this great industry, one of the most prosperous men was Lorenzo Martínez. He lived in a mansion, located on a hill in the midst of his vast estate which was famous throughout the country as "La Princesa." With him lived his wife and their little daughter. This daughter was a beautiful child with curly hair like thick shining gold. Even her fair skin, slightly tanned by the sun, shone like gold. Her eyes were brown with golden lights. She was so charming, so lovely and so pretty that very soon she had won the name of "Princesita." Thus her happy father had caught the idea of naming his *finca* "La Princesa" after his adorable daughter. "It is wonderful!" he said. "Golden fruit and a

golden child! Why, I'm a very Midas in my possessions!" And it was then that he had a further idea. He had an artist paint a glowing picture of the radiant girl. And pasted on every box of fruit that went forth from his groves, there appeared as a trademark, a reproduction of the enchanting likeness of the little princess, surrounded by clusters of golden fruit, with the name "La Princesa Groves" printed underneath. The picture of Princesita soon became known in far places of the world. The pride and prosperity of Don Lorenzo and his wife, Doña Elisa, scarce knew any bounds. And the light of their lives was their Princesita, playing innocently among the fruit trees.

Just as Don Lorenzo was one of the persons highest in the citrus fruit industry, so a poor orphan, named Gilberto, was among the very lowliest. Gilberto was born of good parents, but by a tragic accident he was left an orphan at a very early age. He lived in San Juan with his uncle, and he had never in his life been in the country! To help make his living, he was forced to peddle oranges and grapefruit through the streets of the city. He was really a very clever and ambitious boy, and he managed to earn enough extra money to enable him to go to school.

Every morning he pushed his cart to the market of Puerta de Tierra where he was accustomed to buy his fruit from an old man named Alejandro. This man drove in daily from the Princesa Groves to sell the oranges and grapefruit that were too ripe to ship away. Alejandro and Gilberto were good friends; but they seldom had time to talk much, because Gilberto always had to hurry home to put his fruit away in time to go to school. It

was in the afternoon that he did his vending. Alejandro had told Gilberto that he came from the *finca* called "La Princesa." Gilberto thought it must be wonderful to live in the country.

"You are a very lucky man, Alejandro," he would often say.

"I lead a life of hard work," Alejandro would reply, "but sometimes the little princess comes and talks to me and then I feel repaid."

The boy had no idea what Alejandro meant by this.

Gilberto loved the beautiful fruit that he sold to the people. Sometimes he stood in the shade of a building, peeling oranges. He was very skillful at this, and as the long curly peelings dangled down into one corner of his cart, he liked to imagine that gold was dripping out of his hands into his strong box. He enjoyed handling the cool pale globes of grapefruit. He was always very particular to pick the best fruit out of Alejandro's lot. He took joy in arranging it artistically in his little cart, and delighted in the sunlight glinting on his fruit. "Some day I shall have piles and heaps of real gold," he thought, running his hands over the smooth yellow balls.

Occasionally Gilberto wheeled his cart down near the docks. He used to see heavy truckloads of fruit being brought there for shipment. "How rich and fertile the country must be!" he decided on observing this. Noticing that many of the boxes came from "La Princesa Groves," he examined the picture of the lovely girl, wondering who she might be. "Perhaps she is the Golden Spirit of the fruit," he thought. You will not be surprised at his thinking this, for as you may have already guessed, he had the heart of a poet.

"Who is La Princesa?" he asked Alejandro one day.

"She is the fairy of the fruit groves—" began old Alejandro.

"Oh I knew it! I knew it!" exulted Gilberto.

Alejandro stared at the boy in astonishment, and then

A fruit cart near the docks at San Juan.

continued: "In reality she is the only daughter of the rich Señor Lorenzo Martínez, owner of the vast Princesa Groves."

At this information Gilberto grew sad. How could he ever hope to know such an exalted person as Princesita?

"She is the most beautiful girl in all the land," old Alejandro was saying, "and has hair like a *cascada de oro!*"

"Well," thought Gilberto finally, "the princess will never know nor care anything about me. But that will not prevent my treasuring her image in my heart."

So thereafter, as he wheeled his cart through the streets, it was with such happiness in his cry of *"Chinas, chinas*

y toronjas!" that people turned to look at him, wondering why his song was so cheerful. But who would not sing happily with the image of a sunny princess in his heart?

"How is *la Princesita?"* Gilberto asked every day of Alejandro.

"As beautiful as ever," invariably replied the old man. "Why don't you make a trip to the *finca* and see for yourself?"

"Oh no!" exclaimed Gilberto in dismay. And then seeing that Alejandro looked quite perplexed at his tone, he stammered, "I—I haven't the time! You see, time is money to me; but some day perhaps . . . ."

The truth was that Gilberto dreamed of nothing so much as the moment he would first look upon Princesita. But he could not have been persuaded to go while still so poor. His pride would not allow the beautiful girl to see him thus. No, he must wait and work, and perhaps eventually he would be wealthy and have fine clothes, and then he might venture to appear before her. How surprised the little rich girl would have been had she known that not only was her image enshrined forever in the heart of a poor city boy, but that she had become the high ideal towards which he was striving, and shaping his life.

"Tomorrow is Princesita's birthday," announced Alejandro one morning. "She will be eleven years old!"

The old market-place of Puerta de Tierra, with all its crowded stalls, noise and confusion seemed to fade away before Gilberto's rapt gaze, and he saw only a beautiful laughing girl standing all aglow with sunlight, somewhere among green trees.

The next morning he brought Alejandro a box carefully wrapped up. "This," he said, "you will please

carry to Princesita." All that day he almost walked on air, thinking of Princesita with his gift—*his gift*—in her pretty white hands. "Eleven years old," he thought. "I must never forget this day, never! Let me see—in seven years she will be eighteen; in seven years, I shall be twenty-one and we shall both be grown-up. Let me wait then seven years and work, that I may be ready at that time to lay my offering at the feet of the princess. What shall my offering be? To a golden princess, the spirit of the golden fruit, surely it should be nothing less than a bag of gold!" And Gilberto, the boy-dreamer, went his way with such a smile that in no time at all he had sold his whole day's supply.

Now Princesita received many beautiful gifts as befitting a young lady in her station. And at night a *fiesta* was celebrated in her honor. But of all the happenings of that day, none mystified her more than the contents of a rather shabby box which was handed to her by the old *peon,* Alejandro, whose duty it was to take the ripe fruit to the city.

"What is this?" she asked.

"I do not know, Princesita," he replied. "It was given to me by a friend of yours," and he would tell no more, having thus promised his young customer, Gilberto.

Her surprise was doubled when she opened the box and saw that it contained only some yellow flowers which were already withered by the heat of the day. She started to throw them away, thinking that someone had played her a joke, when she happened to spy a small piece of paper with some writing on it. Then she read; "Golden flowers to a golden Princess, from her lowliest admirer." This astonished her, especially as the flowers

were so faded and ugly! But her kind heart was of pure gold also. So she folded the little note carefully, put it away among her treasures, and pressed one of the flowers in a book. Now and again she wondered who her "lowliest admirer" might be. At first she thought it must be Alejandro himself, but he assured her it was not.

A year passed, and the boy, Gilberto, now fifteen, had secured some humble work in the San Juan offices of one of the fruit-growers' associations. He hoped that he might always deal with the golden fruit. And some day, somehow, he wished he might become a fruit-grower himself. The fact that he no longer peddled oranges did not keep him from paying frequent visits to Alejandro at the market-place.

On the twelfth birthday of Princesita, he once more handed Alejandro a parcel to be delivered to the girl. You can imagine Princesita's surprise when again old Alejandro gave her a mysterious package. This time it contained a lovely piece of shimmering golden ribbon. But the paper read simply as before: "A golden ribbon to a golden Princess, from her lowliest admirer."

And again Alejandro, who thoroughly enjoyed the secret, would tell nothing.

The next year this constant admirer sent a tiny gold pin. He was evidently advancing in the world. Princesita was becoming thrilled at the thoughts of the unknown poet who sent her a gift on each of her birthdays.

And then came old Alejandro with disturbing news. Princesita had gone to the United States to enter college. "The sun no longer shines on the *finca*," he said mournfully.

"Why did I not know it!" murmured Gilberto with re-

gret. "I could have gone to the pier and seen her, as she went on board the steamer. When, oh when is she coming back, Alejandro?"

But the old man could tell him nothing.

"Please try to find out where she has gone," begged Gilberto. "I must know that."

But it was a long time before poor old Alejandro could secure the information without arousing suspicion. However, he did ascertain it in time for Gilberto to send his next birthday gift—this time a slender golden chain.

So the years passed. The Princess remained in the United States, and Gilberto, with her image undimmed, continued to work. By degrees he rose. His diligence and perseverance earned him steady advancement in his position.

"That is a remarkable young man," often observed the manager. "His interest in his work is unfailing. Surely he will get along in this world."

Gilberto grew tall and handsome. He saved money. He studied. His friends often wondered at one thing. Never could they persuade Gilberto to go into the country.

"But you are a poet," they would argue. "You should come with us and see the beauties of nature."

"I guess I am a city poet," Gilberto would reply. Or, "I was born in the city, here I have lived, and here I shall stay," he sometimes answered.

His friends could not understand such an attitude. How could anyone be so stupid as to remain always in the hot city? They did not dream the truth, which was that Gilberto still hoped to make his first journey into the country, among the fruit groves, in search of a princess.

But she had been gone so long! Would she ever return? Sometimes he feared she would not.

"When is she coming?" he asked Alejandro, who after all these years, was almost too aged and feeble to come to the market anymore.

"I cannot tell," replied the old, old man. "The sun has never shone since she went away so long ago!"

That night Gilberto was dreaming of his princess, as he sat admiring a bottle of lovely perfume which would be the gift for her seventeenth birthday. "Only one more year to wait," he thought; and in the limpid depths of the amber liquid he seemed to see a smiling face.

Another year went by. And suddenly Princesita returned. It had to be thus. "And she is as beautiful as the sun!" exclaimed old Alejandro happily. Once more the turmoil of the crowded market-place seemed to vanish before the dazzled eyes of Gilberto who was entranced by a golden vision.

At last the seven years were over! At last the day had come! It was the eighteenth birthday of Princesita. She arose on that glorious morning, wondering what gift her "lowliest admirer" would send on *this* day. Why had she never seen him? How soon would this charming mystery be solved?

Can you not imagine her disappointment when Alejandro returned from San Juan bearing no gift? And he was as bewildered as she, for it was the first time Gilberto had failed. Princesita walked out among the trees. They were heavy with great clusters of ripe fruit. What a picture she made in her filmy yellow dress, with her shining hair framing her lovely face, ever so slightly tanned by the sun to a golden tint. She picked some of the fra-

grant orange blossoms and placed them in her hair. But her eyes looked troubled, and she felt depressed and sad. Was her romance thus to end in mystery?

In San Juan Gilberto went to the bank. The cashier was astounded when he drew out all his savings, and asked that they be paid in gold pieces. It was a considerable and gleaming pile that he swept into a small bag he had brought with him.

Then he carefully wrapped his gift for the Princess. Finally, with rapidly beating heart, he stepped into the automobile he had hired and directed it to "La Princesa Groves."

When he left the city behind, he felt that he had never really breathed before, so sweet and refreshing was the air. Often he had admired the verdant stretches of open country from across the bay in San Juan. But it was ever so much greener and more luxuriant than he had supposed. And what a feeling of adventure was in his heart!

When at last he reached his destination and saw the magnificent house, he was much too timid to go in. What right had he to enter anyway? He was no friend of the family! Perhaps they would forbid his entering. With a sinking heart he hesitated. All about were the fruit-laden trees. They called and enticed him. He decided that first he would walk among them, in order to gain courage for his curious mission. The fragrant odor of the blossoms thrilled him. The abundance of the luscious fruit filled him with strange happiness. Then coming towards him through the sunlight, unaware of his presence, tripped the Princess!

Gilberto held his breath and stepped under the shelter

of a tree so that he might gaze unobserved. How would he ever dare to approach such a divine creature? All the speeches he had resolved to make, left him. And in this moment of his confusion, the Princess caught sight of him.

She stopped short upon seeing the handsome stranger. For a moment she stared . . . and then, somehow, she *knew!* So she did what any princess would have done: she smiled!

Gilberto felt exultant at that smile. He moved forward. "Princess," he began, but words failed him. Silently he held out the golden gift.

The Princess took it and unwrapped it. Then she gave a cry of delight. For, fold on fold of gold seemed to be falling out of the magic package. Indeed, it was a wonderful *mantón* of golden silk, exquisitely embroidered by the cleverest hands of Spain. Never had she seen such a *mantón!*

" 'A golden shawl for a golden Princess from her lowliest admirer,' " quoted Gilberto.

And then in that magic hour he told her all—how he had always been entranced with the romance of the golden fruit; how he had seen her picture years ago, and how he had imagined her to be the spirit of the groves. Then he disclosed his friendship with old Alejandro. And he related how he had thought of her constantly all this time —how he had striven to make himself worthy of her, and how he had waited seven years for this moment to arrive. And in the end, he presented his offering to the Princess, pouring into her hands his bag of gold. And shining pieces of it fell about her on the ground, raining from her lovely hands—so that he thought of the day

when he had, as a humble boy, imagined the orange-peelings to be streams of gold. Then once more, the Princess turned on him the radiance of her smile!

And—but of course this is the end of the story! Then let us leave them walking towards the mansion. Whom do you suppose they are seeking? None other than Don Lorenzo, as smiling old Alejandro, hidden behind an orange tree, very well knows!

MIRRORS IN LA FORTALEZA

In a palace built by Spaniards long ago
Hang many ancient mirrors
Which have, these passing years,
Held much of Life within their depths;
Yet, look you into any one of them,
And there's your own inquiring face
Against a tranquil room,
And nothing more!
But in one high-ceiled hall,
Which has seen history made
And boasted many a noble foot upon its floor,
There are two mirrors, broad and tall,
Which keep watch face to face:
No mere reflection here
Which takes of Life and casts it back;
But adding each to each,
They form on either side strange corridors
Whose far-off baffling darkness
Melts into infinity.
Then down these dim-lit aisles—
As long and still as Space itself,
Might not some fleet pursuer there,
At vast and vaster distances,
Find all those vanished scenes of yesterday,
Since nothing that has been is ever lost?

THE SPARK

In Ciales some careless person placed a charcoal-stove in an unprotected spot. A sudden gust of wind carried many sparks into the air. One of these fell among some dry papers under a house. In a very short time, fifty dwellings were burned to the ground, and nearly three hundred souls were homeless.

The news travelled quickly, and by night people all over Porto Rico were discussing the Ciales fire.

In Aguadilla, Jaime, a boy of twelve years, was telling his grandfather about it. "And isn't it strange, grandfather," he said, "that such a dreadful catastrophe should result from just one small spark!"

"That is not remarkable at all," replied the old man, "as you will learn when you have lived longer. Most of the big things in life, both good and bad, are the result of just such insignificant beginnings." Then he told Jaime a story to illustrate this truth.

Once upon a time there lived a young Porto Rican called José. His father died, leaving him a modest fortune. In looking over the map, José had always marvelled how vast the rest of the world was in comparison with his native island. One day he decided that he would take a trip across the ocean. Travelling was not so common in those days as it is now. His friends all told him that he was very foolish to think of such an undertaking. In the first place, they said, it would be risking his life.

In the second, he would probably spend most of his money, and consequently would come back no richer than before his inheritance. They advised him to go into business.

"There will be plenty of time to settle down and go into business," he answered them, "and, besides, I am convinced that I shall come back much richer than when I departed."

His friends could not understand this, not realizing that wide experience is the greatest wealth—for it is wealth of *mind* instead of *purse!*

So José sailed away and remained absent for several years. He visited many countries and saw rare and marvellous things. But in all this time he never forgot his beloved *islita.* He was always storing away in his memory the observations which he thought might be of value later on. It was during a chance sojourn in the island of Ceylon that he received his great idea. He decided that when he was again in Porto Rico, he would introduce the utilization of coconut fibre for commercial purposes.

Soon after he had landed on his return to Porto Rico, José went to a small town on the eastern end of the island. This town, which was extremely poor, was surrounded by vast coconut groves. But the townspeople did not own the groves. Most of the men of the place were engaged in picking coconuts, for which labor they received a meagre wage. Others were workers in the cane-fields a little further inland.

Now José might have gone at once to the rich owners of the coconut groves. He could have outlined his plan to them, and without doubt they would have agreed to

it and have invested their money. But José had the kindest of hearts, and in his travels he had observed, with growing pity, the dreadful poverty which exists upon this earth. So he had resolved to combine philanthropy with business. His purpose then was not to help the already wealthy owners to make *more* money, but to enlist the interest of the entire town, so that every person therein might have a small coöperative share in the new venture.

The poor people were for the most part uneducated. Therefore José had to explain his plan very carefully to them. First he called to their minds a picture of the vast ever-increasing heaps of whitening coconut husks which lay about all through the groves. The people were astonished when he told them that these very husks, which they had always burned or left to disintegrate on the ground, were valuable and useful! He then told them how he had visited a strange island called Ceylon, far, far away in the Indian Ocean, and that there he had seen the people making use of all the coconut husks, or "coir," which is the real name for these *cáscaras*.' Next he explained that there was a process called "retting," by which the coir could be softened in water. Following that, the coir-fibre was extracted on a simple machine called a "scutch-wheel." Then came its fabrication.

He told them that beautiful rugs and mats, hats, and strong ropes could be made of it. He said that these ropes were of especial value to mariners for towing vessels, because the coir-fibre contains so much elasticity. Another thing which he explained to them was "coir-dust." This, he said, was left after the fibre was separated. And it is almost as valuable a product as the fibre itself. It contains so much of a certain substance,

"tannin," that it never decays. Also, for some unknown reason, it never loses its moisture. In the hottest sun, it will only dry to the depth of a fraction of an inch, while underneath it will remain moist for a number of years. Hence it is excellent for preserving things. "Think," he exclaimed, "of its value to fruit-growers!" When the prices were low, they could store their fruit in coir-dust and thus wait safely to sell it when prices were high again!"

José told them that these coconut husks, or "coir," were valuable and useful.

Then he explained to them how he wished to establish an industry whereby the whole town might prosper. Each man and woman would invest whatever amount of money he or she might be able, and the returns would come accordingly. In addition, the new business would provide profitable employment for many of the townspeople.

José was young, handsome and intelligent. His personality and his enthusiasm, as well as his clear and simple

arguments, convinced the people of the value of his plan. They hastened to invest in the wonderful new industry. José became the idol of the community, because in him lay its future hopes.

He was now extremely busy organizing the new company. For a low price, he had arranged to purchase all the coconut husks from the owners of the groves. Construction of a factory was under way. He was in communication with buyers, establishing a market for the various products which would be manufactured. He was instructing a class in the art of working the "coir" from knowledge which he had painstakingly acquired in Ceylon. The members of this class would be the teachers of the rest of the workers and act as foremen in the factory. All the people looked cheerful in those days. The little village wore an unusual air of briskness and prosperity. Nearly all the plans were completed and the new business was almost ready to begin. José was indeed the most popular man in town. The men respected him; the women blessed him, and the children adored him. He felt entirely happy. Was he not launched on an enterprise which was going to prove profitable not only to him, but to an entire community? His friends had been much mistaken when they said he would return a poor man. True, most of his money was now tied up; but soon he would begin to receive some earnings. Finally, the enthusiasm of the townspeople rose to such a crest that they decided to elect José mayor. Whenever he appeared upon the streets, he was greeted joyfully by all, for they considered him their benefactor.

There was only one small cloud on the horizon. The business was naturally slow in getting under way, and

here and there an impatient individual began to murmur that it was about time for some return on his investment. One of these discontented people was an old shrewish woman called Doña Agripina. She was one of the wealthier people of the town, and owned a house facing the plaza. From this vantage point she could observe most of the things of importance that occurred. And what she did not observe, she invented. Hence she knew, or thought that she knew, a great deal about everyone's affairs, and she never hesitated to tell all that was in her mind. She had such a sharp tongue that she was feared by a number of people of the town as a dangerous gossip. But on the other hand, she never lacked an audience, for too many people are only too willing to listen to gossip, even though they condemn it.

Doña Agripina had invested in the new coconut-husk fibre company. The sum was small, for she was miserly. But she was among the first to complain about the slowness of the dividend payments. José knew nothing of these murmurings. He was obliged to make frequent trips to San Juan in the interests of the new enterprise.

One day he was walking down a street of the little town. It was early afternoon, and most of the people were indoors away from the heat of the sun. But José was too much occupied to notice the heat. He saw a man approaching, but paid no special attention to him until he heard his greeting: *"Buenos días,* Don José! How is the coconut business?"

José then supposed this man to be one of the investors, though he could not remember his face. But as he was never too busy to talk about the new industry, he

stopped and replied: "Oh, it is doing splendidly!" and then went on to tell the man in some detail about its progress.

It happened that they had stopped directly in front of Doña Agripina's house. She was just lying down for her midday siesta, but hearing voices, she hastened to a window. She opened the shutter slightly to see who was there. She was shocked to find José in deep conversation with the worst man in town! For the stranger was no stockholder in the coconut business at all, as she very well knew, but was a man whom no one trusted because he had already been in prison twice for robbery. She was astounded to see him talking so earnestly with Don José, of all persons in the world! She almost held her breath to listen. What she heard amazed her still more, for at that moment José was saying: "And, my friend, the profits will be more than either you or I dared hope for!"

"So he is talking about *profits!*" she thought excitedly. "What right has he to speak of *profits* to that criminal when we righteous people have never even heard the word from him?" She strained her ears harder so as not to miss a single syllable.

"That is fine!" spoke the other man. "Tonight I shall come to see you."

"Yes, for I am going to San Juan again today. It is better to keep the money there. You would be surprised if I told you that practically every one in the town has invested. I never imagined I should get so much money. Well, tonight then, and we shall discuss it further," concluded José in his amiable voice.

"*Adiós,*" said the other.

"Adiós," replied José, and they moved off in different directions.

Inside the house, Doña Agripina was fairly gasping. "Oh the villain!" she exclaimed. "The thief! To think that he has such a man for a confidant! So there is 'more money than he expected,' is there? And he is 'taking it to San Juan,' is he? Oh! Oh! It is terrible! Is he to steal all our money?" While she was thinking these unjust thoughts, the old woman was hastily dressing herself so that she might visit her neighbors. During the hot afternoon, she went from house to house: "Don José is a thief! He is taking our money to San Juan! He has an accomplice who is none other than that *ladrón* Montasco!"

The story quickly flew over the town. By evening it was on the lips of everyone. But by passing from one to another, it had grown greatly in size and meaning.

"Have you heard that Don José has run away with all our money?"

"He is the head of a whole band of robbers."

"There is no coconut-fibre industry! Who ever heard of making use of useless rubbish anyhow?"

"Oh the wretch! He wants to be elected mayor so he can steal *all* the money of the town!"

"He lied when he said he would help the *town!* He is in league with the grove owners! He only wants to aid them to become richer!"

"He owns the groves *himself.* All our capital is in his hands."

"Down with him! He has stolen our funds!"

While these grossly exaggerated and unfounded re-

ports were spreading like a conflagration far worse than the Ciales fire, José was innocently attending to the company's affairs in San Juan, completing the final arrangements.

Little did he dream of the reception awaiting him in the town which he desired so much to help. At nightfall he returned. He walked across the plaza. The people were amazed to see him, for it was thought that he had absconded.

"He does not know that we have discovered his plot to defraud us," they thought. "He has come back to steal more money." They turned black looks on him.

José was surprised to receive none of the smiles and friendly words with which they had been accustomed to greet him. He did not understand why everyone drew away as he approached. He mounted the platform where he was going to make a speech that night concerning his nomination for election as mayor. But he was never allowed to open his mouth.

"Where is our money, you thief?" Give us back our savings! We want our investments!!" The shouts were deafening. In vain did José implore silence. He could not imagine what had brought on this outburst. The angry, ignorant people persisted and insisted.

"We don't want any coconut-fibre industry! There *is* no such industry! We want our money! You *shall* give it to us!" The mob began to move toward him in a threatening manner.

"We have discovered all! We demand our money!"

José realized that there was a great misunderstanding. If they would only allow him to explain! But they were in no mood for explanations. They were convinced that

he had deceived them and they were determined to have back their investments.

It was with a sinking and then a breaking heart that José watched the shameful demonstration. He knew that through some trick of fate his great plan had failed. There was nothing left for him to do but refund the money and leave the town forever.

In due time, all *was* returned. The people were greatly surprised to recover it, as they had thought it stolen. Then, in their ignorance, they congratulated themselves upon having detected José just in time. Jealously they snatched back their insignificant investments, which, but for their stupidity, might have been converted into considerable earnings for them.

José marvelled at the turn events had taken. He could not conceive how the monstrous story had started. He lost all that remained of his own fortune, because he was determined to repay every cent he had received from the townspeople, and since some expenditures had already been made for equipment, his own funds were necessary to supply the deficit. He simply could not comprehend what had taken place. He never dreamed, until he discovered later, that the whole catastrophe had commenced with the wagging of the malicious tongue of *one* indiscreet and distrustful old woman!

"So you see, Jaime, a man's whole career was made a failure and an entire town lost a valuable industry, all because of one tiny spark—a word of gossip! Surely, then, gossip is one of the worst crimes in the world, since one spark of it can start a more devastating conflagration than that which burns up a whole town. And ruined

characters are far more difficult to rebuild than ruined houses!"

FANTASIA

(NEAR PUEBLO VIEJO)

As some long-buried phantom, rising once again,
Might stare at its reflected image
In the dark and polished surface of its tomb,
The dying thrice-ringed moon
Looks down upon her yellow face
Where it lies mirrored in the black and somber bay;
And seaward fades a gleam of red—
The blinking eye of some chance schooner
Stealing quietly away, protected by the night.
Out yonder glow the deadened lights of old San Juan,
Bedimmed and overcast by gray night mists,
As though the hoary weight of centuries
Lay heavy on the sleeping town . . .
And here upon this low and gloomy shore,
A host of spirits, who have come
From stately shadow-galleons
Riding now unseen upon the ebon bay,
Creep stealthily across the mangrove swamps,
Or glide beneath the ragged sighing palms,
To seek once more that flowered, sunlit place
Where first they came as Spanish cavaliers
When all this world was new . . .
No footsteps bold nor flashing smile,
No clash of sword nor saber-clang,
No glint of gold on doublet red;
But shrouded in grim vestments of the dead,
They silently move on and on
Until they falter, like yon pallid moon,
Before ascending tropic dawn
Which swiftly whelms night fantasies
With radiant floods of light.

BLANQUITA

Once upon a time there lived a very fortunate young goat called Blanquita. She was born in a comfortable shed made of palm-thatch. The very first time she came outside, she realized that her home was a most delightful place. In fact, it was like a little paradise, entirely surrounded by a high fence of bamboo poles and closely interwoven palm fronds. The ground was covered with the softest green grass, generously interspersed with sweet-tasting flowers. A large herd of fine-looking, contented goats strolled sedately about, partaking constantly of this delectable food. Here and there grew stately royal palms, and in the very center of this charming spot, rose a giant *almendra* tree, whose thick red and green foliage spread out like an umbrella, making a cool retreat from the mid-day sun. At one side, between two rows of feathery bamboo trees, ran a stream of delicious water, fed by a mountain spring. Blanquita innocently believed this enclosure to be the entire world, and, while believing so, she was perfectly happy.

But Blanquita's "world" was, in reality, only the goat-pasture of a large *finca* called "Buena Suerte." A few days after the new goat was born, Señor Alibán, the owner, brought his daughter Rosita to see it.

"*¡Qué linda!*" exclaimed Rosita enthusiastically. "What silky hair! Oh, papa, I have never seen such a pretty little goat. Please, may I not have her for my very own?"

The kind father, seeing how much his child admired the tiny creature, said she might have it. "But you must leave her here in the meadow," he cautioned, "or she will run away. You may come to see her just as often as you please."

Blanquita's life was now happier than ever, for her loving mistress came to visit her almost every day, bringing on each occasion some dainty present—a carrot, a piece of cake, a lump of sugar. Some of the goats were jealous of Blanquita. Others said that such good luck would be sure to change. But none of them could help loving the graceful young animal which played so merrily among them, knowing nothing as yet of the seriousness of life.

It is easy to understand why living in this place might have been a delightful experience. And so it was, until the foolish Blanquita listened to the voice of temptation.

Buena Suerte consisted of a fertile valley and some gentle slopes among high, rugged mountains beyond Corozal. In these mountains lived many poor people. They had no protected pasture land, so their goats usually roamed free, finding what food they could on the sparse, rocky hillsides. Consequently these animals were strong and wild, and accustomed to the vicissitudes of the mountains. They really envied the goats of Buena Suerte, and should have liked nothing better than to live there in its beautiful pasture. But their pride would never allow them to admit this. They pretended to prefer their life of roving freedom.

It so happened that these half-wild goats would often come up close to the bamboo paling to taunt the peaceful inmates with their captivity. The older goats, wise with

experience, did not listen to these deceitful boasters; but Blanquita was always filled with curiosity to hear what they had to tell.

"Come away," warned her mother. "Pay no attention to those absurd goats. They are only envious of our good fortune, and eager to do us harm."

No sooner was it forbidden, than Blanquita, like a naughty child, wished more than ever that she might hear what the invisible goats had to say. She often stole near to the fence. The wicked outsiders quickly realized that this silly goat was easy prey. Here was their chance to vent their chagrin upon the too-contented flock. With soft and alluring voices they told Blanquita marvellous stories of the vast free world beyond the narrow pasture. "The grass is a hundred times as sweet and green out here," they said. "The air is fresher. There are myriads of beautiful trees and strange shrubs such as you have never seen. There is no fence to keep you from going where you will. You can climb to the very tops of the mountains from which the entire world is visible. You have never imagined such happiness as we know!"

Thus Blanquita learned that her pleasant home by no means comprised the whole world. She began to think how wonderful it would be to escape and run free with those unfettered goats. So she plotted and planned. She became sly and wary, watching for a chance to leave the enclosed meadow. She was not so winsome and appealing as when she had played so merrily without a single care. Every day she would follow her young mistress down to the gate and try hard to push herself through.

"Poor Blanquita!" sympathized Rosita. "Of course you do not want to remain always in this stupid place."

So one day the little girl, disregarding her father's advice, led Blanquita a short way beyond the pasture. The pet goat had her first glimpse of the wonders related by her false friends. After that she became completely obsessed with the desire for freedom. Again and again the old goats warned her against listening to the wicked tempters, but she paid no heed.

Of course, an opportunity finally arrived. Late one afternoon the outside goats attracted her attention to a place where the rain had washed a small hole under the fence. She gave a cry of joy and started for the opening. But as she ran, she chanced to glance behind at the tranquil home where she had known so many happy and protected days. Of a sudden it seemed especially dear to her—now that she was about to leave it. She half-turned to go back, fearing the unknown world beyond. But a very old and malicious black goat, which had known a life of extreme hardship, was peering through the opening that was much too small for him to enter.

"Aha! You are afraid!" he taunted. "After all your fine talking, you fail to take advantage when the opportunity arrives!" Then he added in a honeyed tone: "Have you forgotten all the wonders which await you here?"

At these words Blanquita's poignant longing for freedom was revived, and she hastened to crawl through the hole. The sly goats received her with feigned friendliness. Their plan was to draw her far from the environs of the pasture, knowing that by luring away the favorite, they would at last realize their revenge on the haughty, aristocratic inmates of Buena Suerte.

"Come!" they cried, "follow us to the wonderful moun-

tains!" and one and all they leaped nimbly away. Blanquita had difficulty in moving her slender white legs with such unaccustomed alacrity. But what a glorious hour it was! Further and further from home they fleetly raced, into the inviting hills. The air was indeed fresh and invigorating. Blanquita was so overwhelmed by her liberty that she failed to notice the lack of soft green grass and dainty flowers. Up, up, over the rock-strewn ledges towards the blue sky they went, fleeing from the twilight which was creeping into the valleys.

Back in the pasture, Rosita had discovered the absence of her darling pet. She ran crying to her father. How could Blanquita possibly have escaped? At dusk they located the tell-tale crevice under the fence. "It is too late to search for her tonight," said Señor Alibán, "but I shall start out the first thing in the morning."

Rosita had to be content with this, but she was extremely nervous and sad. Then she heard the fierce barking of the dogs, far away in the desolate hills. She shivered with fear. "Poor, poor little Blanquita," she sobbed, "if I had not let her outside of the gate that day, I am sure she would never have thought of running away and leaving me."

And what of Blanquita all this time? Her brief hour of unrestrained pleasure was fast ebbing away. Now, even on the mountain-top, it was growing dark. The sun set quite abruptly behind a great bank of threatening dark-blue clouds. A chill, damp night-wind sprang up and swept shrilly over the hills. One by one the treacherous goats who knew the difficult paths, disappeared. Suddenly Blanquita discovered that she was alone and forsaken on the mountainside.

She was frightened and began to bleat loudly. She called to her new friends for help, but they were either far away or did not care to hear. Turning this way and that in the starless darkness, she ran against trees and became tangled in the thorny bushes which pulled out large wisps of her soft white hair. Through the obscurity, she heard crashing steps approach. She stood still, not daring to move or breathe! A large shadowy figure loomed suddenly beside her. . . . With a wild cry of terror she began to run madly. Her delicate feet, accustomed only to soft grasses, were cut and bruised by the sharp stones. On and on she flew, not daring to stop, though her breath came in torturing gasps. That terrible gigantic figure might be close behind! Poor Blanquita! How could she know that the huge object was only a harmless cow? Such is the fate of those who armed only with ignorance, venture into the unknown.

The wind changed to a shrieking gale. The deserted countryside was lighted by weird flashes of bluish lightning. Thunder rumbled overhead, and soon the tropical rain fell in torrents. Imagine the feelings of the miserable young goat—cut and bleeding and drenched with rain! But her adventure had just begun. . . .

All at once in the opaque darkness, she felt that a million knives were sticking into her body. Everywhere she turned, the cruel blades pricked and cut her delicate flesh. It seemed that she must die. She did not dare open her eyes, fearing that they would be pierced. Blindly she stumbled about among her invisible armed enemies. In no way could she evade them. This agony endured for more than an hour, and all the while the rain continued beating down violently.

At length she could go no more: but in the same moment she felt herself free of the terrible knives. She fell, panting and exhausted on the muddy ground.

By and by the rain ceased. Gathering a bit of feeble courage, she raised her head and tried to distinguish something through the blackness. In the distance she perceived a faint light. Prompted by some instinct, she painfully rose and went towards it. But alas, instead of protection, it only led her into graver dangers. She had not ventured far, when, with thunderous barks and yelps, a great dog leaped towards her. Often she had heard the distant howling of this fierce animal when she was safe with her elders at home in the pasture. It had terrified her even then. But now it was close at hand and moving with all speed in her direction. She dared not turn back, for there were the merciless knives! With new strength, born of fear, she wheeled to the right and fled. On she raced frantically until she was again exhausted; but she was relieved to hear the dog's barking recede in the distance.

It seemed, however, as if there were no respite for the suffering young goat who longed heart-breakingly for the security of her beautiful pasture—for now she found herself in a kind of dense forest. She made slight progress, for everywhere she turned she knocked against an impenetrable barrier. Deeming herself hopelessly lost, she finally lay down in a narrow space, and resigned herself to Death. "What a wretched, wicked creature I am," she thought. "Oh! If I am ever restored to my home and my beloved companions and mistress, I will never leave them again so long as I live!"

Every experience—even the most tragic—must end in

time. The sky began to lighten over the eastern hill-tops. But it was still dark where Blanquita lay half-dead in the "forest."

Now the early laborers began to come out to their work in the cane-fields of Buena Suerte. Down the long, uneven furrows they pushed with their gleaming *machetes*. One of them stumbled over something in the dim light—something which moaned.

"What is this?" cried the man jumping back in alarm. "Oh! a *cabrita!* She looks as though she had suffered greatly, but still she is plump and tender. What a delicious roast she would make!" He looked about cautiously, and felt the sharp edge of his *machete*. Blanquita, who had been surveying her surroundings with amazement, now gazed up at him with imploring, pain-filled eyes. But it grieves me to say that he was not a man to feel much pity for a dumb animal. Was this, then, to be the bitter end of the longed-for freedom —death under a cruel butcher's knife? What treachery her false friends had played her! How foolish she had been to listen to them!

The laborer raised his long cane-knife. Blanquita was powerless to move. "I will kill this young goat," he thought, "and carry it back to my wife who can prepare it for Sunday dinner.

But Rosita's father, true to his promise, had gotten up at daybreak to search for the lost pet. He had scarcely entered the cane-field, which was only a short distance from his house, when he heard a tiny bleating moan, and hastening in that direction, he was just in time to see the man raise his *machete*. "Stop!" called

the master in a thundering voice. "Would you be so heartless as to kill a poor suffering animal? Go away from here at once! I will not have a person like you working at Buena Suerte!" The laborer moved sulkily away, and Rosita's father tenderly picked up the quivering young goat. He was astonished at her condition, bleeding as she was and covered with mud and burrs.

"Poor little creature!" he said. "You must have had a terrible night!" He called to Rosita, and they carried Blanquita to the pasture, which, much to her surprise, was close at hand. She had run in a circle, and in the course of that awful night had returned to within a few yards of her own happy home!

"O Papa," wailed Rosita, who was both overjoyed at recovering her pet and horrified to see its pitiable condition. "O Papa, she is so terribly scratched and bruised! And what a hunted look is in her eyes!"

"Yes," answered Señor Alibán, "she must have had a really terrifying experience—perhaps some dog chased her. Her scratches, though many, fortunately are not deep. Doubtless she received them in the pineapple field." The spiny leaves of the pineapples, then, were the "million knives" which had pricked Blanquita, while the "dense, impenetrable forest" was only a field of sugar cane!

Blanquita, however, could not forget the man with his upraised *machete*. She felt that she would spend the rest of her life cringing from that stroke which she had never received! This constant hallucination was more effective than all the advice which her comrades now offered daily, for it not only kept her forever reminded

of her dreadful experience, but at the same time it made her appreciate her vast good fortune in having such a well-protected home and such a kind little mistress. Blanquita was indeed, a sadder and a wiser goat!

KITE SONG

Porto Rican golden day,
  Come, boys, a-running!
Brisk sea wind with fresh salt spray,
Sweeping high across the bay . . .
  Come, boys, away!
In the sunlight, sparkling, gay.

Joyous cries and shouts of glee.
  Up, boys, to the sky,
Loose your kites, let them fly free,
Skimming o'er the high palm tree!
  Sing, boys! Look! See!
How like birds—what jubilee!

Now they meet there in the blue—
  War! War! is the cry.
Upturned faces ..... Oh! if you
Could your glad hopes there pursue!
  Laugh, boys, shout anew,
You to happiness hold clue!

THE DESERT

In the desert of Porto Rico lived a boy named Graciano.

At once you are thinking, "Impossible! There is no such place in Porto Rico!" But unbelievable as it may seem, this verdant garden-isle really does have a large and unmistakable desert. If you cannot travel there to see for yourselves, look on your maps of the island. In the remote southwestern corner, between Ensenada and Lajas, and south of San Germán and Sábana Grande, you will observe a considerable portion of land which is almost bare of markings. That is the desert.

Passing beyond the fertile region in the vicinity of Guánica, you will soon observe that the landscape has inexplicably changed in general color. From the soft green of the cane-fields, it has become a dull and lifeless brown. For miles you see nothing but desolate hills and barren plains. The fiery sun beats down with almost intolerable heat upon the dry, cracked earth from which long since it cruelly drew the last vestige of moisture. The vegetation is skeleton in character, with only a few crackling brown leaves clinging to dead plant-stalks and trees. These trees have a grotesque appearance, as though, after twisting into fanastic shapes in an agonized search for water, they had ceased struggling in despair. And one feels that they must now stand still forevermore, stretching their long skinny branches toward the heavens, in mute reproach that they send no rain. And this re-

proach seems but increased when billowy clouds roll over the sky, shedding nothing upon the earth except the mockery of their own weird, shifting shadows! Only the drab cactus grows out of the arid, rock-strewn soil, covering the countryside with its repulsive spiny plants. An occasional river bed is but a tortuous succession of

On sped the *guagua,* carrying Graciano "beyond the hills."

dusty stones. The most depressing thing of all is that the land is divided into fields, in which may still be seen remnants of crops, cut short of life in some distant time for lack of rain. It is like visiting an ancient battle-field where Nature fought and lost! And over all spreads that dreadful monotonous pall of brown—deadly brown, unchanging for miles and miles.

And it was in the very midst of this waste-land that Graciano lived with his father, mother and eight brothers and sisters! Why did they remain in such a disagreeable place? Mainly because they were very poor and it

cost them nothing. Every day the father went to the distant Central at Guánica where he had some minor employment in the great sugar mill. Because of the terrific heat, the unfortunate man had to start on his walk before daybreak, and could not leave for home until nearly sunset. Thus he always arrived long after dark, so that Graciano seldom saw his father except on Sundays. He knew him as a small thin man, who, when he was not sleeping, constantly bewailed the terrible lack of rain. "When I was a boy," he had said at least a thousand times, "this country was green and fertile as far as the eye could see. My father always had work in the cane or cotton fields, and never lacked money. Many people lived here then. But disaster descended upon us, and one season there came no rain. Nor has it rained so many times since as I can count on my ten fingers!" When the father spoke thus, Graciano's mother used to turn sadly away, thinking that to listen to his lamenting would only make her wretched life more miserable. Poor thing, she led a bleak existence, but nothing could kill that one spark of optimism which still burned in her heart: hope for the future of her children. For them she managed to toil through the endless, scorching days.

Graciano, who was the oldest child, knew that what his father said was true. He could see about him the evidence of a past agricultural prosperity. But, since he had been able to remember, the miracle of a rainfall had occurred only twice!

Of course Graciano had had no education, for that part of the country could not support a school. Little ignorant boy that he was, he knew but two real de-

lights in life—the love of his mother, and the distant hills. Shimmering on the far horizon, these latter were alternately green and blue. In the early morning, they released the glowing ball of the sun from among their strongholds. At evening, they reflected its descending glory, with wonderful shades of rose and gold. "Beyond the hills," sighed his mother, sometimes, "lies paradise."

"What is paradise?" asked Graciano.

"A place where water runs, and green things grow, and flowers bloom!" she replied.

Later Graciano brought in a piece of cactus.

"Is this a flower, *mamita?*" he questioned.

With a cry, his mother folded him in her arms. "No! No!" she sobbed. And then she tried to tell him what flowers were. "It is my hope," she finished, "that when you children are larger, you may leave this desert and go in search of the flowers of life."

Graciano longed to go beyond the hills, but the sun was too hot for him to try to run across the country. At night the hills seemed to disappear mysteriously. But one day they suddenly seemed to be very near. This illusion was due to a peculiar condition of the atmosphere, called a "mirage." When Graciano saw the hills looming so closely, he began to run towards them. Across the parched fields he went, in the blazing sunlight. But when he had gone a long, long way, he still had not reached his destination. Suddenly the mirage lifted and the hills were as far away as ever.

Graciano was exhausted. Looking back he saw that his home stood at a great distance. He felt that he could not return through the sunlight. Then he dis-

covered that he was near the roadside. He had never come so far as the road before, and he looked at it curiously where it straggled along between the fences. It really could scarcely be called a road, it was so narrow and so full of stones and ruts. But it served well enough for the modest travel of the few dwellers of the desert. And certainly no outsiders ever came that way by choice. To Graciano, it appeared very interesting, and he forgot how tired and thirsty he was.

But what was this approaching? Surely a monster! Graciano hid behind the trunk of a large dead tree. The Thing came nearer, chugging and bumping over the stones. Then Graciano could see that it was even more terrible than he had first thought, for there were *people* inside the monster. How horrible that they should be there! It must have *eaten* them! He began to run swiftly away, but he had not gone far when he was stopped in his flight by the sound of a loud, sharp noise:

Bang!!

He scarcely dared to look around, but when he did so, he saw that already the people were emerging from the beast. They must have killed it then, when it made that noise, and now they were coming triumphantly forth to safety. He could see a boy, two men and a woman. Although he was still very much frightened, his curiosity proved stronger than his fear. He made a few steps in the direction of the people and the dead beast.

The people saw him. "Oh! There is a little boy!" exclaimed the woman. "Let us call him and perhaps he can tell us where we are. Oh what a terrible, terrible place! I am dying of this heat!" Then she raised

her voice and called: "Little boy! Little boy, come here!"

Graciano was very timid and advanced toward them very slowly. He could not understand how anyone could be so beautiful as the woman who had summoned him. Suddenly it occurred to him that she must be a wonderful being from paradise—beyond the hills.

"Do not be afraid, little boy," she was saying now. "Come closer. We will not hurt you. We only want to ask you a question."

Finally Graciano arrived within a few feet of the people. He could see that the two men were busy doing something to the monster, which appeared to him as the strangest thing he had ever seen.

"We are lost," said the lady. "Some mistaken person at Ensenada told us to take this road. But we have come miles through this desert and have not yet reached Lajas. How far is it, do you know?"

Graciano said he did not know. Suddenly he asked: "You want to go beyond the hills?"

"Yes," answered the sweet-voiced lady, looking at him curiously. She was astonished to see the look with which he then regarded her.

"I have never been there," he stated simply; but she thought she had not in her whole life heard any one sentence which contained half so much longing and pathos.

The strange boy now came close to Graciano. "Hello," he said.

"Hello," responded Graciano looking with amazement at the other's fine clothes and shoes.

"Our automobile has a flat tire," exclaimed the little boy.

An automobile! Then the strange monster was not a monster at all, but an *automobile!* It was the first one Graciano had ever seen. He looked at it with the keenest interest, but was too shy to say anything.

"Do you live here?" asked the woman.

"Yes, señora," replied Graciano, "in that house away over there." He pointed towards his home, and then he saw his mother coming across the fields to look for him.

When she came near them, she was much astounded to see that they had driven a motor car over that almost impassable road. She soon told the lady how far they were from Lajas. "Some distance down there you will come to the place where they are building the new road. We hope that it may be different in this section when it is completed," she said wearily.

The other woman noticed the sadness of Graciano's mother.

"This must be a very hard place to live in," she sympathized.

"Oh, señora, you cannot imagine," cried the mother. "As for me, I could bear it! But my poor children! There is no school. They have nothing—nothing. I but live in hopes of the day when I may send them beyond the hills!" Then the woman understood why Graciano had asked with such a wistful look if they wished to go "beyond the hills." She realized that in that phrase was summed up all the longing that was in the hearts of these poor, lonely people. "I should like to help you," she said kindly, and then asked how she might address a letter to them.

Graciano's mother said that no mail ever came there,

but that it was possible to communicate with her husband through the office of the sugar mill at Ensenada.

During this time Graciano and the smaller boy, whose name was Raúl de Castro, had become friends. Raúl had invited him to sit in the beautiful automobile. He was now telling him about the wonderful city of San Juan which was his home. Graciano was listening wide-eyed and breathless.

"Oh if I could only go there," he exclaimed, "I would learn many things so that I could work and bring my family out of the desert!"

"Oh, mamma," cried Raúl, "let us take Graciano with us."

"We cannot do that," said his mother, "but perhaps when we reach home we may arrange for him to come."

Then the chauffeur announced that they were ready to go on. The two new friends parted reluctantly. But when they were gone, Graciano's mother was not only treasuring a silver peso which the kind Señor de Castro had given her for her children, but also she carried in her heart the promise of the Señora de Castro that she would hear from her.

It was several weeks later, and Graciano had almost forgotten the day at the roadside, when one night his father brought to their cottage so important a message that he was awakened to hear it. The de Castros had sent all the way from San Juan for Graciano. He was to go to their home, as a kind of servant, where his chief occupation would be to act as a companion for little Raúl. He was even to attend school! His mother's heart was almost bursting with happiness as she told him. As for

Graciano—you can imagine how such news would affect a twelve-year-old boy! "Soon," he shouted, "I shall know as much as Raúl de Castro. And a little later, I shall know more, for how I shall study! And then, *mamita mía,* I shall come home, bringing you many flowers, and take you away beyond the hills forever!"

There is never time to tell all about anything. However, you can picture Graciano's feelings when he finally went away one morning with his father, before the sun had risen. "Away from the desert! Away from the desert!" his heart kept singing. All that memorable day his astonishment grew, until by night he was utterly exhausted. First came the sight of the vast sugar mill at Ensenada. He thought surely that the smokestack was the highest thing in the world! Then he caught a glimpse of the lovely harbor of Guánica where several large steamships lay at anchor. He hardly knew which to admire more—the ships or the wonderful blue *water!* He was nearly crazy with joy to see that water—he who had been born and raised in a desert. Then came the great experience of getting into a *guagua* to go to Ponce. The sensation of riding in a motor vehicle rendered him speechless. Ponce seemed to him to be marvellous beyond all description. He was terrified when his father, who had come with him this far, placed him on the large San Juan bus and said good-bye. He had never dreamed that the world could be so vast and he so very small. But *at last* he was going "beyond the hills." He must keep up his courage. And what an experience it was—at once thrilling and terrifying—for him to go over the mountains! When he reached the famous Aibonito Pass and

looked over the immense expanse of country, he felt that indeed he was on top of the world. Already, in his mind, the smokestack at Guánica had greatly diminished in importance! But when they came to the north side of the island, he finally realized why his mother had told him that beyond the hills lay paradise. Oh, the fresh coolness of the air! The miraculous greenness of the grass and trees. And the glorious flowers! Everywhere they grew in gorgeous colorful masses. He was positively enchanted. Then wonder of wonders, the sun suddenly was clouded over and it began to rain! Actually to pour down rain! He put his arm out the window and delighted in feeling the cool water stream over his skin. Each town they passed through he thought must be San Juan—Juana Diaz, Coamo, Aibonito, Cayey, Caguas. He began to fear that they might not meet him in San Juan. The great numbers of people everywhere filled him with amazement. In the late afternoon at La Muda, they passed the road leading to Guaynabo. Soon the man who drove the *guagua* turned to him, and pointing off towards the north, said: "There is San Juan!"

He looked, and far across the green luxurious valley, like a dream-city, spread San Juan, gleaming white and beautiful in the late sunlight. And beyond was a blue-misty expanse which, he later learned, was the Atlantic Ocean. Down into Río Piedras and on through Santurce into San Juan they sped. The number and magnificence of the buildings bewildered him.

At last they arrived at their destination and Graciano was glad, for he felt that if he saw any more he could not stand it. He was met by Raúl and Señor de Castro

in the big automobile. Soon they reached the house, and the timid boy was being greeted by the kind Señora de Castro.

We should like to tell you all about Graciano's new life, of his first days at school, and the friends he made, but that would require another story. Suffice it to say that the boy made remarkable progress. The de Castros were very proud and happy to think that they had discovered him. They paid him a small wage for the duties he

The number and magnificence of the buildings bewildered him.

performed, and every month he was able to send most of it to his mother, for his benefactors were so generous with him that he had no need for money.

Now I am sure you want to know what finally happened.

Well, several years passed and Graciano grew to be a young man. He had done so well in his studies that Señor de Castro finally took him into his own business, and he was a servant no longer. At last he had saved

enough money to take a trip back to the desert. What a homecoming it was! His family were filled with content at the progress he had made and were exceedingly proud of him. But he was observing the dreary surroundings. They brought back all the memories and sensations of his childhood. He felt so sorry for his family that he could keep his secret no longer. *"Mamita,"* he cried, "I have come as I promised, to get all of you and take you away from this desert!"

What happiness they felt then! His mother could scarcely believe that her dream had come true so soon; and further, that not only her children, but she as well were going to participate in all the joys to be found "beyond the hills."

So Graciano, made strong by his education, and the kindness of his friends, led his family out of the desert, into the green country, where he was able to provide them with many advantages and comforts of life.

But strangely enough, the dream of *his* life is not yet realized. Nor can he hope to accomplish it by himself. If it is *ever* realized the combined efforts of many men and a great expenditure of money will be needed. For although he, Graciano, escaped from the desert-country, and also made it possible for his family to depart, still numbers of people live there and endure its pangs and hardships. Graciano can never forget these poor people, and those great stretches of fields covered with the pathetic remnants of the crops of other years. There is no doubt that the land is fertile. And where things grew once, they can grow again. The great missing factor is water. In the course of his studies, Graciano learned of that wonderful service called *irrigation*—irrigation,

which has reclaimed so many of the desert places of the earth. It is his fondest hope then, that some day those miles of desert country may be reclaimed for his beloved Porto Rico, and that once more that silent desolate section of the island will bloom with flowers, fruits and crops, and become the happy home of thousands of his countrymen!

LA CRUZ DE MAYO

(THE SOUTHERN CROSS)

Pale day above Borinquen hills gives way
To deep'ning dusk where gliding stars flare bright
And planets glow; and there in that vast height,
The silvern lights of constellations play.
See, one hangs low—the Southern Cross of May,
In symmetry complete and sparkling white,
While chanted litanies roll through the night,
As men their fervent adoration pay.
Swift rise, my spirit, lift thyself in song
Along with them; forget now any care
That may in petty thrall enfetter thee,
And lose thyself in wonder with this throng
Which God hath richly blest, revealing there,
In Heaven's shrine, the Cross of Calvary.

THE SPANISH EARRINGS

In order that their new homes and lives might be as nearly as possible like those of the beloved mother country, the Spanish ancestors of the New World transported many beautiful objects from Spain. Centuries have rolled by, and such of these articles as still exist have become priceless "antiques." So that today in Porto Rico, there are descendants of the early settlers who own a variety of choice and artistic heirlooms—furniture, mirrors, candelabra, vases, fans, shawls, jewelry—in the wake of which, no doubt, many strange stories follow.

Far among the mountains, in the direction of Utuado, was the ancient coffee plantation named, as one can still read in faded script above the entrance, "El Hidalgo." The owners, who were of an old and aristocratic family, were now in Porto Rico and now in Spain, as the rise or fall of their fortunes permitted. Of a family dating almost as far back as that of the owners themselves, was the present foreman—Mateo Simón. Indeed, in the history of El Hidalgo there was no record of a time when a Mateo Simón had not been in charge!

Naturally, in the course of such long and faithful stewardship, the family of Simón had come by many favors at the hands of their masters. About their weather-beaten but comfortable dwelling were various tokens of both ancient and recent esteem. But their especial pride lay in the ancestral earrings, which had been

bestowed as a reward of merit at a forgotten date. Fashioned from the purest gold, they represented two tiny galleons of the most clever and exquisite workmanship. Indeed they were triumphs of the goldsmith's art, and there was really nothing finer in the possession of the masters themselves.

The Señora de Simón of this story chose to wear them often, even though they were much too heavy for her pretty ears. When her son, the last Mateo Simón, was far away in China—strangely sent there by those very earrings—he could never easily recall his mother's face. In his memory, it came only as a white blur, shadowed by sleek black hair, and made mysterious on either side by two wonderful golden galleons—the first objects his baby-eyes had ever noticed, being attracted to them by their dangling to and fro while his tiny head lay on his mother's breast.

The foreman of El Hidalgo was always a very busy man. It was his inherited pride and joy to turn out perfect crops, so that of course he had little time to absent himself from his many duties. The present foreman had never travelled further than Ponce, while young Mateo had never even been to Utuado.

All day this little boy played in the sunny hills. He did not go to school, for there was none. His mother, whom his father had married on that one visit to Ponce, was extremely dissatisfied with her secluded life on the coffee ranch. She was very vain and forever trying to make herself look beautiful, falling into a rage the while because there was no one to see and admire her!

She was so discontented that she paid no attention whatever to the methodical education of her young son.

But occasionally she was quite gracious, and then she would tell him stories. One day, stripping off her wonderful earrings, she told him that galleons were great ships which sailed over that vast body of water called the sea. She related what she knew of the *conquistadores* and their famous adventures. While she talked, young Mateo held the earrings. He did not understand very much of what she was telling, because he had never seen an ocean or a ship, or even a town. But realizing that they must be altogether delightful things, he begged her to explain more about them. He could not comprehend how a ship which floated on water, could be many times larger than their own house. Where could there be enough water for that? But when he was told that the sea is far more vast than the land he was utterly amazed.

"Tell me, tell me!" he was always asking. "Tell me more!" Mateo was twelve years old at this time and eager to learn everything.

"You should not fill his head with useless ambitions, Raquel," admonished the elder Mateo Simón, his father. "What need has a Simón to know of ships and adventure? How will that knowledge help in managing El Hidalgo?" Then taking Mateo by the hand he said: "Come with me, my son, you are old enough to begin to learn the duties which will one day be yours. Our ancestors have superintended the work at El Hidalgo for more than two hundred years, and they have done it well." So he took the boy and instructed him with the only knowledge he had—that of coffee-growing. And such instruction he deemed to be sufficient for his son, as it had been for him, and for his father before him, and for all their ancestors.

But Raquel de Simón was a disappointed woman. No sooner did she discover that her husband disapproved of her telling young Mateo of the world, than she improved upon her former listless efforts and spent many hours recounting all she knew. Her own knowledge and education, however, were limited; but discontent had fired her imagination. So into the willing ears of her son she poured more exotic tales than ever of the great world, and when she was not certain of fact, she supplied fiction. In the mind of young Mateo, the opportunities at the *finca* soon appeared very narrow. But the pictures he had of the world beyond El Hidalgo were most peculiar and distorted—founded as they were upon the incoherent tales of his excitable mother who had not ceased bewailing her mountain seclusion. She never thought of obtaining books and instructing her son wisely and well, so that if he should venture beyond the confines of the coffee plantation and the mountains, he could proceed with a clear vision. No, she only filled his mind with wild fanciful pictures of splendors in which he felt a growing desire to participate. In her stories, the city of Ponce was pictured as a great cosmopolitan center. San Juan, which in her life she had visited but once, became the mecca of all the world's wonders. And the ships which sailed from that metropolis to other lands, were bound for no less than Paradise itself!

On the deck of one of the earring-galleons stood the minute figure of a sailor. When this was pressed with the finger-nail, it proved to be a spring which opened the tiny hold of the vessel. This hollow space, his mother informed Mateo, had probably at one time contained some important secret. The other earring, which had

no such spring, appeared to be a solid piece of gold.

Mateo was growing older. He was now compelled to help his father during part of the day, but he was forever thinking about going away. He had no idea whatsoever how to do this. Once he had consulted his father, but the latter had become so angry that he forbade him ever to mention it again; and he even withdrew the promise of a visit to Utuado, fearing that such a taste of the outside world would only make his son more dissatisfied. The elder Simón could not conceive how a son of his could desire any experience other than the time-honored managing of El Hidalgo. In one way the father was right. The management of El Hidalgo was a very desirable and remunerative position. It could be carried on by the most unimaginative of men with perfect success. But Mateo Simón did not have a prosaic son. No; God had blessed this isolated mountain lad with that divine quality, imagination. He intended him for greater things. But the medium He employed to teach him these things was indeed an odd one—a vain, selfish and discontented woman who dangled the World enticingly before the eyes of her son in the form of a pair of curious earrings! Yet, in even stranger ways than this has Genius been born and fostered!

Young Mateo found all his pleasures in his dreams. Eagerly he anticipated the hours of sleep. When he closed his eyes, he would immediately visualize a tiny pair of golden galleons floating on a sea no larger than the contents of a tea-cup. As sleep crept over him, his vision would grow—the galleons becoming larger and larger, the sea spreading ever broader—until it was a

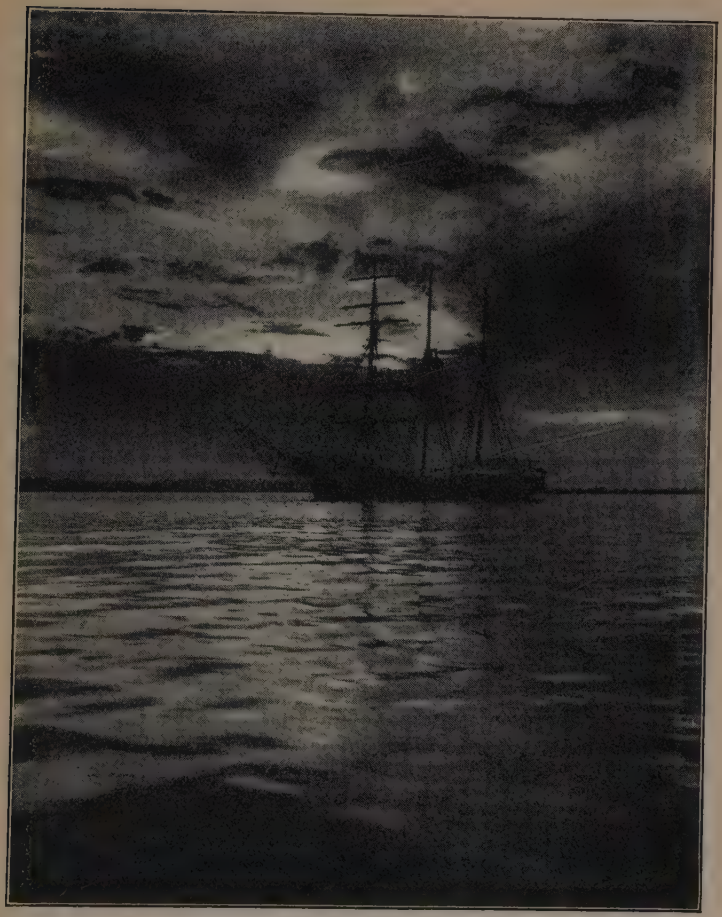
boundless blue expanse, over which sailed two huge and gallant ships of gold bearing the joyous dreamer around the World! Night after night this fabulous adventure took place in the mind of the young man sleeping far up in the quiet hills to the east of Utuado. But while the one galleon on which the dreamer stood was entirely open to his exploration, the other which always came just behind, had every hatch and porthole tightly closed. Moreover, it finally seemed that could he penetrate the mystery of that second galleon, he would learn whither led his course, not only on this journey, but through life itself.

Constantly Mateo Simón watched the ornaments hanging so beautifully on each side of his mother's face. In after years, when he had become a great poet, Mateo said: "As a boy, I was so attracted by those galleons, that I seldom noticed the face of that strange woman, my mother. Yet it was she who sent me forth into the world. She knew that my father wished me to succeed him as foreman of El Hidalgo. But she was angry with him for bringing her there, and in revenge, she made me discontented with my lot by telling me alluring tales until at last I ran away." As we have said, Mateo watched the ships. Often he begged to examine them. But, capricious as she always was, his mother usually chose to refuse him this pleasure. Whenever he did have them in his hands, he would press the spring which opened the hold of the one, and then he would curiously scrutinize the other. Great shadowy memories of his dreams would cross his mind. . . .

One day he was seated alone toying with the tiny galleons—dreaming his dreams. . . . "Open the galleon!

Open the galleon!" something seemed to say. "Open the galleon, young man. The time has come. . . ." This did not seem strange to him, as he sat in the quiet haze of late afternoon, with the rich golden light from the westering sun streaming in through the half-closed persiennes. His languid hand lifted the unopened galleon. How heavy it seemed—as though it contained some giant cargo! He fingered it, and peered at its glinting sides through dreamy eyes. What was this? What had happened? The whole dusky room was suddenly pervaded by a strange pungent odor, as though all the rare perfumes of the east were mingled there. In slow amaze he regarded the gleaming trinket in his hand. His sharp nail had finally touched the hidden spring, which, subconsciously, he had *always* known he must some day find. The tiny hold was open to him at last! It was not empty. A little silken thread lay there like the tiniest snake imaginable, perfectly coiled, on top of something old and yellowed. Half intoxicated, Mateo took the delicate thread and gently pulled . . . and pulled . . . until a thousand tiny folds unfurled into a sheer gossamer square of ancient Chinese silk, which had remained untouched for centuries! And there, embroidered in spidery thread by the cleverest, most patient hands, copied from some ancient navigator's chart (perhaps that of far-famed Marco Polo himself), was an antique map of the world. In spite of its many queer devices and symbols, Mateo recognized it and was overjoyed with his marvellous discovery. And so, upon hearing his mother approach, he put the treasure next his heart and closed the galleon forever.

That night, under the brilliant Porto Rican moon, Mateo stole away from El Hidalgo and his two centuries'



Mateo found employment on a ship, white-rigged and tall-masted, and sailed away toward the rising sun. . . .

inheritance of uninspired labor. And he went away, never to return. In truth he was armed only with a vision; but if all of us could begin our lives with such

a vision, we would be fortified by God's most priceless gift.

Down from the mountains into San Juan came the youthful dreamer, encountering many a disillusion by the way, but with a heart strong in its faith. Many fair and beautiful ships were riding on the blue waters of the bay, to delight his dazzled eyes. He found employment on one of them, white-rigged and tall-masted. And he sailed away toward the rising sun, with a tiny silken map as a talisman over a heart that was fired and urged onward by a Dream. And so he came to China, and to India, and to Egypt, and, in time, to all the great and wondrous places of the world.

At last the poet *lived* his dreams—dreams that had come to him in youth upon the lonely coffee plantation—dreams inspired by two golden earring-galleons. And he sang of his experiences in mighty poems which, unto this day, delight the hearts of less adventurous men.

BLUE HILLS OF PORTO RICO

The hills are old, and blue as dusky lapis
  In a mummy's ring . . .
The hills are tired, and blue as hazy pine-smoke
  From an Indian fire . . .
The hills are far, and blue as shimmering sapphire
  Of the Tyrrhene Sea . . .
Old, tired, far blue hills which melt into the sky,
  Are they the mystic way to paradise?

THE PUNISHMENT OF SANTIAGO

Santiago certainly played the guitar and *bordonúa* better than anyone else within miles of San Lorenzo. There never was a *fiesta* or a *baile* that his skill was not in demand. Thus he was a much occupied and popular person. There was only one drawback to this life of pleasure: he was always either playing, or resting after having played, or dressing to play again. This left him very little time—by no means enough in which to look for any real work. His income as a musician consisted mainly of praise and flattery—a very dangerous mixture to give to any man.

This explains why Antonia, his wife, was accustomed to exclaim: "When that husband of mine learned to play those instruments, it was the most disastrous day of my life!" And the poor woman spoke the truth, for since then she had been compelled to support their family of five children.

She was large and strong, and worked as a *lavandera* for many of the people of San Lorenzo. Every morning she collected great heaps of clothes, which she tied into a huge bundle and placed on top of her head. Then, with a large bar of soap in her hand, she started along the steep path, down the green hillside towards the river. She usually wore a full yellow skirt and a red waist. The habit of balancing objects on her head had made her so erect and graceful, that in spite of her cumber-

some burden, she looked as majestic as a queen.

When she reached the valley where the river traced its course, the sun had not risen above the hills. She greeted other women who were also arriving, and then proceeded to her own special spot to begin her day's labor.

The water was clear and shallow, and ran singing over the countless rocks. At a certain point on the brink, Antonia had arranged some stones so as to form a circular pool through which the fresh water could flow in one side and out the other. If she wished the water to stop running, she closed one aperture with a large stone. In this primitive wash-tub, she dipped the clothes up and down, then covered them with soap and rolled them into a ball which she pounded on the rocks with a flat wooden paddle called a *paleta*. To remove the spots, she rubbed the garments with a corn-cob or a broken coconut shell. When she had finished cleansing several of the pieces, she rinsed them out and spread them to dry on the sunlit banks behind her. Sitting there in a squatting position, she washed for hours every day.

All up and down the river were many women doing the same thing. The whole margin of the shining stream was a succession of soapy pools. Hundreds of pieces of wearing apparel were spread out on the rocks to dry. The antiquity of this world-wide custom somehow glorified these toilers there in the great valley which was like a wonderful garden. Out of the lush green grass rose tall royal palms resembling pillars of marble. The sides of the mountains abounded with gorgeous tree ferns and other tropical verdure. But the *lavanderas* were so accustomed to this scene that when they raised their tired

eyes for a moment, they caught little of the beauty, nor did the songs of the river afford them much delight.

But all day long conversation flew back and forth as rapidly as the motions of their busy hands. Antonia, beginning her work almost before the sun was up, thought bitterly of her neglectful husband whom she usually left sleeping peacefully in a hammock, worn out from some *baile* of the previous night. Often she spoke of her troubles to the other women who never ceased to be interested in her problem. For, although they knew he did not deserve it, they secretly cherished a great admiration for the worthless Santiago. And also they found Antonia's wrathful speeches highly entertaining.

"I had already been sleeping five hours when he came home last night!" she would exclaim. "But, mind you, his weariness did not keep him from waking up long enough this morning to beg me for some money. 'What do you want money for?' I asked sweetly. Thinking he was going to get it, he said: 'To buy a new red shirt for—' But you may imagine that I did not let him say any more. 'Money for shirts! Money for shirts,' I cried, 'and money for this and money for that, and money for strings for your guitar and *bordonúa!* Always money for something! What *I* should like to know is where we are going to get money for rice, money for beans, money for charcoal, money for—' but would you believe it? the great lazy thing stuck his fingers in his ears and turned over and went to sleep again. I shook him and called him, but he would not awake!" Antonia furiously finished speaking, shaking the garment she was holding with such great energy, that one of the women cautioned her to take care lest she tear it.

"But I hear that the dance was very fine last night, and that Santiago—" began another woman.

"Do not tell me about it!" cried Antonia. "That terrible guitar—it is the bane of my life! Oh, to think I should ever have married such a man! How well I remember the day he first brought home that *instrumento!* Why just imagine, he traded his wedding-ring for it! He had *never* worked much—but after *that—!* Another time, he spent weeks making himself a *bordonúa.* Oh how I wish I had never seen him!"

"No, you don't, Antonia," said an old woman who was washing at her side. "You know you are very proud to have caught the handsome fellow who was the idol of every girl for miles around! I believe you are still fond of him—for if you weren't, you would not be working here to support him!"

At this, Antonia's eyes flashed, but she hung her head and said nothing. The old woman had spoken the truth —she *had* been proud to marry the popular Santiago.

So while she toils away at the river, let us take a look at this husband of hers.

About ten in the morning, it was Santiago's custom to arise. He would play for awhile with his children who adored their jolly, easy-going father. Then, taking a pan of water into the dooryard, he would hang an old mirror upon a tree trunk and carefully shave. He admired himself greatly in the mirror. His lean brown face was indeed handsome. His mouth was big, and he had a ready smile which showed a perfect row of strong white teeth. He wore a small moustache, which he spent a lot of time waxing and twisting at the points. His eyes were deep blue, and twinkled all the time. His candid good-nature

won everybody to him, and was what had made his wife put up with him so long. She was usually angrier when she was away from him, than when she was with him.

After he was shaved, he would smooth his curly black hair carefully. Then he would go back into the little house and look about for something to eat. If he did not find anything, he merely shrugged his shoulders and smiled. Then he would put on his hat, which was not only adorned with a blue and red band, but also a black string hanging down at one side with a large polished pig's tooth to fasten in his button-hole. He would light a cigarette, and then, if he had a five-cent piece, he would place it in his ear and wait for a *guagua* to come by. If he had no money to pay his fare in the bus, he would cheerfully walk into town.

When he arrived at the plaza, he was always greeted gaily by all who stood about. Usually he simply idled his time away, but occasionally he did some small job or other. Sometimes he would be called to tune a piano. If he especially wanted some money, he would go to the pineapple packing-house where he could, as a rule, get some bit of work to do. In the grinding season, he was always to be observed chewing a piece of the sweet sugar-cane; but no one had ever seen him with a *machete* in his hand. What money he made at his odd jobs, he generally spent for his clothes, which his wife absolutely refused to buy for him. He needed to dress well for the sake of both his art and his vanity. "But why don't you *charge* for your playing?" Antonia would storm. "*Mi querida* Antonia, you know I cannot do that!" he would answer. "I go as a guest. Of course, if they want to make me a *gift* . . . But I could never *ask* them

for payment just for playing a guitar." "Imagine such an argument!" she would answer scornfully. So, Santiago earned a little money, but *very* little. What he did not need for clothes he spent for *dulces* and *regalitos* to take home to his children. No wonder they loved *him* somewhat more enthusiastically than they did their poor mother. They had never known her to buy them anything more exciting than rice or codfish!

One day the news spread that a great fair would be held in San Lorenzo. Printed announcements of it appeared everywhere. Agricultural and industrial products from the entire surrounding countryside were to be exhibited. The schools were to display the handiwork and note-books of their pupils. There would be pig-roasts, games, speeches, and a parade. Many well-known people were coming from all over Porto Rico. The Governor was going to make the opening address. A large pavilion for dancing was to be constructed. Every one in San Lorenzo was talking about the *gran feria.*

"O *mamita,* may we go?" shouted the children.

"Yes," Antonia promised them. "We shall all go to the fair. But *mamita* will have to work very hard to earn money to buy you some new dresses!"

Then the children were delighted; but their anticipation was as nothing compared to Santiago's. He had been asked to act as chief musician at the grand ball which was to continue all day in the pavilion. This was the highest honor he had ever been accorded. Vain man that he was! He no sooner heard Antonia mention new clothes for the children, than he thought of himself. Surely he must have a stylish new suit for such an

occasion! He began to work harder than he ever had before. Piece by piece, he purchased the clothes he would wear that day. In his enthusiasm, he even bought a dress for Antonia. The poor woman believed he had at last begun to reform. She was very thankful.

About two weeks before the fair was to take place, foolish Santiago made a grievous mistake. One day in the plaza he met a man who had a ring for sale. The jewel in it shone like fire. Santiago admired it intently, and suddenly the thought came into his mind that it would look magnificent upon his finger while playing the guitar on the opening day of the great fair! "It is the last touch needed to make my new outfit the height of elegance!" he said half-aloud. He felt an overwhelming desire to possess the ring. Cautiously he fingered the money in his pocket. He knew it amounted to about four dollars. Would it be enough? He was afraid to ask the price. What if it should be more than he could pay? Finally, after gazing at it and examining it a great deal, he ventured to inquire how much it was worth.

The owner, eyeing Santiago closely and noting his prosperous appearance, answered: "Forty dollars."

Santiago almost fainted. He had never possessed that much money at one time. His dream of grandeur was shattered by those two words. Just then, the glitter of the gem dazzled his eyes again. How he longed to own that ring! He gathered courage, and began to bargain.

For a long time the negotiating continued, with stubborn resistance on both sides. Gradually, however, the owner reduced his price. Forty dollars . . . thirty-eight . . . thirty-five . . . and so on until Santiago had

persuaded him to come down to twenty dollars. Lower than that he declared he would not go. "And I shall give you two weeks," he said, "in which to pay for it."

Santiago wavered. Twenty dollars! Where would he *ever* get it? He caressed the money in his pocket. He could not resist the sparkling ring. Drawing a long breath, he said: "Make it nineteen dollars. Four dollars now, and the balance in two weeks!" As he uttered these words, it was queer how he seemed to see Antonia's face, full of reproach, staring at him.

But it was too late now to withdraw. For immediately, the man exclaimed: "Done!" and before Santiago was aware of it, his four dollars were gone and he was in possession of the ring, with a debt of fifteen dollars attached.

He started homeward very slowly, with the reluctance of a small boy who has been into mischief. The sunlight reflecting on his ring revived his courage. How beautiful it was! Surely Antonia could not object to having so admirable a possession in the family. Strengthened in the conviction that Antonia's delight must be as great as his own, he hastened his steps. He did not realize that Antonia's work-tired eyes were almost blind to beauty—still more would they be to the beauty of such a luxury.

What a half-hour followed his home-coming! Antonia, exhausted after her day at the river, felt that this was the last straw.

"A ring! A *ring!*" she cried incredulously. "What on earth ever made you buy a ring? But worse still is to think that you owe the man fifteen dollars! When and where do you expect to earn it? Oh, it is terrible! Terrible! What shall I do?"

"Please be quiet, Antonia," begged Santiago. "Look at the jewel. See how pretty it is! And remember, I have two whole weeks before I need to pay. I can easily save the money in that time. Think how wonderful it will look on my finger the day of the fair. You will be very proud when you see me playing before all those fine people."

"Proud indeed!" scoffed Antonia. "You will probably be sitting in jail instead of playing at the fair!"

"Take it," he implored. "Look at it! See it shine! Try it on, Antonia."

"I!" she exclaimed. "*I* try it on? You must be crazy! On these ugly hands?" And she held up her two hands, which were misshapen from work, and all red and swollen from being all day in the water. She laughed hysterically.

Santiago at last looked ashamed, and said nothing. She seized her advantage. "Nineteen dollars for a ring!" she said. "Nineteen dollars! Think of the things we could buy for the children with that amount! Why the least you could have done with nineteen dollars would have been to get me nice wash-tubs and a wash-board, so I would not have to break my back stooping over the river, nor wear myself out climbing up and down that hill! If I have to support you, you might at least make it a little easier for me!" And she began to weep.

Santiago, now thoroughly miserable, said: "Please do not cry, Antonia. I shall take back the ring and bring you the money I have already paid on it."

But this was easier said than done, for try as he would, he could not find the man who had sold him the ring.

Antonia said: "I might have told you that before you went looking for him."

Now began the most strenuous two weeks of Santiago's life. He *must* save fifteen dollars. He soon found that this was going to be extremely difficult. He grew to hate the mocking sparkle of the ring, which he wore constantly for fear of losing. When anyone admired it, he felt actually ill.

Work was very scarce just then. He earned a little by helping on the construction of the dance-hall in which he looked forward to playing with so much eagerness. His spirits were quite high the morning he started to work. He might still play and astonish the eyes of everybody with his ring. But his hopes were doomed to fall. For he was a very clumsy and inexperienced carpenter, and by night he found himself jobless, with but one dollar and fifty cents in his pocket. Weary and discouraged, he looked for other employment.

Finally, the day of the fair arrived. Happiness was in the heart of everyone in the town, except Santiago's. For try as he would, he had only been able to save eleven dollars. It seemed that in no way in the world could he obtain four more paltry dollars. There was one thing he would not do (he *vowed* he would not, though the heavens fell), and that was to ask Antonia for the money.

Needless to say he did not sleep till ten o'clock on the opening day of the *fiesta*. Very early he arose and went outside, beginning a half-hearted attempt to shave. He felt a little better as he stepped into the sunshine. All the world looked gay. Being naturally optimistic, he thought that perhaps the man who had sold him the fatal ring, had disappeared forever. Maybe he might play at the

baile after all. He could hear Antonia and the children in the house, preparing joyously for the holiday. His spirits rose, and he even began to whistle. But the whistle suddenly died upon his lips, for, as he looked up, he saw the MAN approaching.

"*Buenos días!*" called this unwelcome visitor.

"*Buenos . . .*" answered Santiago with a sinking heart.

"And how do you like your ring? Better than the day you bought it, no?"

Santiago would have liked to reply that he wished it were at the bottom of the sea. Instead, he said nothing.

"Come!" urged the other. "Where are your wits? Can't you see that I am in a hurry? I have come for my fifteen dollars. Let me have them at once, please."

Poor Santiago! He wished that he could run away, but the man was big and fierce-looking. Oh, if he could only disappear into the ground!

"Come, make haste!" shouted the other. "Give me the money quickly."

"Oh, Señor," faltered Santiago. "My wife does not admire the ring. I should like to return it to you . . ."

"Ho! Ho! that's pretty good! His *wife* does not like it! And what kind of a man is he who lets his wife dictate to him? Hurry up! My money!"

"I—I have not quite all," stammered Santiago weakly. "E—eleven dollars . . ."

"What?" shrieked the other. "*Eleven dollars?* Who is speaking of *eleven* dollars? Give me *fifteen* dollars at once, or I shall call the police!"

How Santiago trembled then. "W—wait a minute," he said, starting into the house, forgetting his vow not to beg from his wife.

"Don't be long about it, and see that you bring out the full amount," threatened the man.

Inside, Santiago gasped: "Oh, Antonia, the man who sold me the ring is here. He says that if I do not bring him fifteen dollars at once, he will call the police. You know I have only eleven dollars! Oh, Antonia, you must give me four dollars, else I shall have to go to jail!"

"What did I tell you!" exclaimed his wife. "Did I not say you would end in jail over this matter? Go, for all I care! Certainly I do not have four dollars to give you."

Santiago pleaded, but in vain. Finally he turned to go out. His dejected appearance touched the good heart of Antonia. At the same moment she had an inspiration. "Come back!" she called. "There is one way that you can save yourself the disgrace of going to jail. See all those clothes in that corner? I had intended to wash them tomorrow and the next day and the next. There is, as it happens, just enough work there to earn four dollars. If you care to take them down to the river and wash them all today, you will be welcome to the money. The man said 'two weeks'—so you have until tonight to pay him. It is the only way I know for you to get out of this scrape."

Santiago looked at her helplessly. What did he know about washing? But he was like a drowning person who grasps at any help. Realizing Antonia's determination, he accepted this hard proposition, and went outdoors.

Approaching the man, he said: "Here is eleven dollars. The four remaining dollars I shall earn today and pay to you this evening at six o'clock."

The man grumbled considerably, but finally he agreed

to wait. "Mind you do it," he called back, as he walked across the road, "or I shall have the police here in no time!"

Antonia was smiling to herself as she watched her crestfallen husband awkwardly gather up the clothes. She knew how deep his disappointment was at not being able to play for the grand *baile*. But many and many a time he had gone off to *fiestas* with never a thought of her. This was her harmless revenge. Surely this interruption in his plans would teach the lazy, vain fellow a lesson he would never forget.

"Here," she said casually, as he was about to depart, groaning under his heavy burden, "you forgot the soap!" As he held out his hand for it, she noticed the ring sparkle. This was indeed her day of opportunity!

"By the way," she remarked carelessly, "you would be foolish to try to wash clothes with that ring on. It would be sure to slip off into the river. To lose both the ring and the money would in truth be a calamity. You had better let me wear it today."

Santiago silently handed over the ring, which he had planned to display so dramatically. As he was descending the path, his wife called after him her final instructions: "And don't forget to dry the colored clothes in the shade!"

Then she and the children dressed and went off to the fair where they spent a glorious day. Antonia enjoyed a triumph with the beautiful ring, which she flashed before the eyes of her envious friends. "Yes, Santiago bought it for me!" she announced gleefully. They could not believe their eyes or ears.

And what of Santiago? Toiling away at the river-

side, he thought he had never performed such an arduous task. His back ached and the sun beat down on him relentlessly, while he was almost blinded by the glare on the water. The soap constantly slipped away from him. The spots simply would not come out of the clothes. He did not know the secret of pounding them with a *paleta* against the rocks and rubbing them with the *tusa de maiz* or *casco de coco*. His hands, unused to work of this kind, became red and raw with the rubbing. And still worse, he could imagine all the people enjoying themselves at the fair, while he toiled here alone—for not a single *lavandera* was at the river that day. A vision of his empty chair at the front of the musicians' platform haunted him. But after he had washed for an hour or two, he ceased blaming Antonia. Instead, he felt more and more kindly toward her. "So *this* is what she does day after day," he thought. "Dreadful, back-breaking work! No wonder she scolds! What an ungrateful, selfish husband I have been!" He was filled with remorse, and made many a good resolution to do better in the future.

Santiago's absence was conspicuous at the fair, especially at the *baile*. "Where is Santiago?" ran the question. Gradually the rumor spread that he was washing clothes at the river! To the hearers, it was unbelievable. "Washing at the river? Impossible! That work is for women! Besides, Santiago *never* works!"

"Notwithstanding, it is true."

"Let us go and see!"

"Come, everyone; Santiago is washing clothes at the river!" The news spread instantaneously. A great crowd collected. Someone started to chant: "Washing at the

river! Washing at the river! Santiago's washing at the river!" Everyone began to march to the rhythm of the derisive refrain: "Santiago's washing at the river!"

Someone hastened to Antonia. "They have heard what your husband is doing. A great crowd is on the way to the river to tease him."

Antonia hastened towards the river. Far ahead she could see large throngs of people on the bridge. They were shouting and laughing. When she arrived, she saw Santiago down below, looking very small and funny, all alone beside the deserted stream. There were cries of *"¡Bravo, Santiago, el lavandero! ¡Viva el lavandero!"* Poor Santiago could stand it no longer. He jumped up to run away, but his foot slipped, and to his intense dismay, he fell backwards into the soapy pool with a tremendous splash! Then indeed did a shout ascend! Kind Antonia now felt only apprehension for her ridiculous-appearing husband. She climbed swiftly upon the parapet of the bridge, where everyone could see her, and raised her hand for silence. Then she screamed: "For shame, all you wretched men, that you should mock the one man who generously stayed home to work on this day of days, so that his poor wife and family might enjoy the fair!"

Everyone heard this magnanimous and loyal defense, including Santiago who bowed his head in shame. Then, cheering the brave Antonia loudly, the crowd turned and moved back to the town. Antonia jumped down, and ran below to her woeful husband. She assisted him out of the water.

"Antonia, my wife, you are wonderful!" he said from

his heart. "Today I have learned a lesson. Never shall you come down to this exhausting labor again while I have strength and health!"

Then he turned to his task once more; but Antonia insisted on helping him finish. Under her experienced hands, the washing was soon done. "You go and dress now and take your place at the fair," she said affectionately, "and I shall collect for you the four dollars for these clothes!"

So the day ended in happiness for all. Never had Santiago played so well, as he did after he walked among his amused and applauding friends and climbed upon the flower-decked platform in the dance pavilion.

The MAN was duly paid at six o'clock, and Antonia was the proud possessor of the new ring. "I never want to wear it again," said Santiago, "for from now on *my* hands will be the work-worn ones, and yours those of a lady!"

And Santiago made good the promises he had vowed by the riverside. He secured employment, and from that day on, he worked steadily, while Antonia only took in an occasional washing in order to help out. But still Santiago is the champion guitar-player. On many evenings, the strains of his music urge happy feet to dance. And now, always accompanying him at these *fiestas,* is his dear wife Antonia, upon whose finger shines the memorable ring.

FRESAS

Early each morning, Ana, Tomasito and Pedro were out on the hillsides, gathering big, red *fresas* from the hundreds of low bushes growing all about. When they had filled their tin pails, they ran home, where their mother sorted the luscious berries, putting the good ones into various small cardboard boxes. Then the three children ate their lunch, washed their faces, and taking the fruit, went out on the highway to try to sell it to travellers. They did this almost every day, as did many other boys and girls in that part of the island. For wild *fresas* are very plentiful, and are found ripe the year round over the mountain slopes of Porto Rico, especially in the region surrounding Aibonito.

One day in June, a man was riding in an automobile over the Military Road from Ponce to San Juan. The summer sun beat down almost insufferably on the dry, brown country, south of the mountain divide. The road was lined with flamboyant trees in full scarlet bloom, but so still and hot was the air that the weary stranger felt he might be passing through a tunnel of fire. Up and down wound the smooth highway, around multiple curves, until at last he felt that he had reached the top of the world, so vast was the panorama which spread out below him. Far, far across numberless valleys, filled with that shimmering, blue sun-haze, which hangs so beautifully over the mountains of Porto Rico, he could see the misty

expanse of the Caribbean Sea. He had reached the famous Aibonito Pass—that place in the mountains where the Military Road traverses the top of the central range. Before the white men came to the New World, Indian trails crossed this natural mountain pass. And many years after the discovery, Spanish engineers built the *Carretera Central,* which for the most part follows the old trails.

No sooner had the traveller reached the northern end of the pass than the descending road ran into the green country of frequent rainfalls. There was evidence of a recent shower, for the foliage and highway were wet. The stranger's parched throat made him wonder longingly where he could find some cold water. Just then, shrill cries reached his ears:

"¡Fresas, fresas, dulces y frescas! ¡Llevamos fresas! ¡Aquí tienen fresas!"

There by the roadside stood the three children, each holding out to him a box filled with the most beautiful red berries he had ever seen. Cool raindrops glistened on them. They were irresistible to the tired traveller. And then because each uplifted face was so eager, he bought all three of the boxes. As he passed on through the hot afternoon refreshing himself with the delicious *fresas,* he wondered all the while what kind of fruit they were. For he had visited many a country, including all of the islands of the West Indies, and *only in Porto Rico* had he found these tempting berries, of a crimson color unmatched in brilliance . . .

Now nearly three hundred and fifty years before the traveller rode up over the Aibonito Pass and bought *fresas* from Ana, Tomasito and Pedro, a long caravan might have been seen wending its way through one of the most

famous mountain-passes in the world. This historical defile is located in the far-off Himalaya Mountains of India, and is known as the "Khyber Pass." It connects the city of Kabul in Afghanistan with Peshawar in the ancient Indian state of Punjab and is the land-route through which the peoples of northern and western Asia, and Europe, have entered isolated India since the dawn of history.

The camel drivers were weary, for the way was long and arduous over the narrow road which wound between grim and towering mountains. Many of them were sick at heart, for they were far from home. Rare and varied were the burdens packed upon the backs of the patient beasts. There was citron from Corsica, and amber from the shores of the Baltic Sea; and there was wine from Madeira, and rose-attar from Bulgaria; there was oil from Smyrna and fine cedar-wood from the ancient forests of Lebanon; there were sword-blades from Toledo and prayer-rugs from Persia. And these are only a few of the choice products going down into the bazars of Lahore, Delhi, Benares and Calcutta, there to be traded for rare silks, spices, and jewels of the east. Motley and of many races were the traders and soldiers-of-fortune who motivated the lumbering caravan. By no means the least interesting of these was one Spaniard—a bold, fearless fellow, whose hand was ever close to his sword-hilt, and whose ready laugh was as quick to turn into a frown. This man was no less than Diego Vargas de Guzmán, adventurer, soldier, and trader. He was of that cavalier type, the *conquistadores,* who at that time were roaming over nearly half the world.

Diego Vargas was feeling a great thirst, and a longing

for the sight of his own sunny Granada. He was tired of gazing at rugged mountains towering into the sky, their peaks inaccessible to man. Vargas de Guzmán did not like anything that was inaccessible, for he was a conqueror at heart. He and all his companions were looking forward to the descent into the poetic land of Kashmir. They were anxious to reach the bazars in the towns all down the Ganges River, that they might begin their trading. They were more than eager to gain the seaport of Calcutta where they hoped to find ships for home. But Don Diego was not going to trade his good Toledo blades for silks or spices. What he looked for was gold—*Gold,* which was then the password of all Spain.

So the caravan emerged from the dark canyon of the great Khyber Pass and began winding down the mountain-sides. It was Diego Vargas who first caught sight of some boys, whom he supposed must be Hindus because they wore tall turbans woven of yak's wool. They were holding up baskets of strange, bright-red fruit to tempt the way-worn, thirsty travellers.

How sweet and juicy those berries tasted to the weary adventurers on that day so long ago, amongst the vast forbidding Himalaya Mountains. Don Diego, riding atop a swaying camel, dipped his hard fist deep into his basket, and ate great mouthfuls of the tender fruit, so that the red juice ran down over his black beard! He laughed and chuckled in his keen enjoyment. A moment later he began to lament loudly. The clever little mountain urchins had filled the bottom of the basket with dried berries, putting the ripe ones on top to deceive the buyer. Don Diego was about to fling the worthless berries, basket and all, over the cliff, when something, for a wonder, stayed his care-

less, impetuous hand. He looked at the fruit for a moment, while a great wrinkle in his forehead showed that he was thinking hard. Then he opened the big pouch of stout Cordovan leather, which never left his side, and with one sweep of his hand emptied all the dried berries into it among various other unique objects, after which he promptly forgot the incident.

So the caravan passed, in the coolness of the afternoon, down towards the mystic vales and streams of Kashmir.

Diego Vargas de Guzmán negotiated shrewdly and well, and when he embarked at Calcutta, it was with much gold in his leathern pouch. For awhile we lose sight of him in his travels, but it is known that he visited islands of the far east, whence he eventually returned to Spain with a great pig-skin chest from China, full of many treasures. And in the bottom of that chest was the battered Cordovan leather bag.

But Diego never unpacked his lacquered pig-skin chest in Spain, so soon was he off on new adventures. He had barely landed in Cádiz when he heard of nothing but the New World, and the treasures to be found there. With a gusty sigh for Granada which he had so longed to see, he hoisted his belongings over the side of a caravel which was departing for the alluring land of Porto Rico. Jumping on board after them, he cast his lot with those who went to seek their fortunes in unknown and dangerous places.

No sooner did the small ship arrive in Porto Rico, after a hard voyage of two months and twenty days, than Diego Vargas found adventures aplenty. Two days before he landed, a fleet of Spanish galleons, carrying treasure from Mexico to Spain, had been driven by a

storm into the harbor of San Juan. The English having heard of this came, under the command of Sir Francis Drake, to attack the port. For nearly nine years the inhabitants had been expecting this assault—ever since Spain went to war again with England.

Sir Francis Drake attacked El Morro.

The governor, Colonel Pedro Suárez, issued a general call-to-arms. This was like music to the ears of Diego Vargas, who was heartily tired of inactivity after his forced rest at sea. With zest he joined the fierce defense against the English who were finally forced back to their ships and far away.

The gallant prowess of Diego Vargas de Guzmán won him commendation and admiration on all sides. He swaggered about the narrow streets of San Juan, where men showed him respect and boys followed him. You may be sure he missed none of the shy glances from the pretty girls who stood behind half-closed persiennes. Don Diego boasted that he had never been conquered. Colo-

nel Pedro Suárez, admired him immensely and declared that more of his type should come out from Spain. He invited this swashbuckling soldier-of-fortune to a great ball in Casa Blanca, celebrating the defeat of the English.

It was at this *fiesta* that the hitherto indomitable Diego Vargas met his downfall, though not at the expense of any cannon- or musket-ball! This impossible feat was simply and easily accomplished by two sparkling black eyes, a coquettishly flirted fan, and a graceful tripping foot! Pretty Amelia Navarra de Moreno in her swishing silks and soft laces, became in one moment the most attractive and the most intimidating object the bold eye of Diego Vargas de Guzmán had ever beheld. He felt his strong heart flutter and grow weak.

In no time at all these two were married, and Don Diego had petitioned his good friend Colonel Suárez for a grant of land in the interior of the island. Is it possible that the warrior is so tamed that he is going to turn farmer?

Out over the mountain trails rode Diego Vargas and his bride, with all their chattels, to take up a peaceful life among the beautiful hills of Porto Rico, there to found a family and a home. And so soothing was the influence of his lovely wife and of the long dreamy days under the tropical sun, that Diego Vargas scarce noticed his heart beat faster when he heard, from a fleeing refugee, that Lord Cumberland had laid siege to San Juan with a fleet of twenty vessels! Such things now seemed far removed from his tranquil existence.

Amelia de Vargas was a good wife and an energetic housekeeper. One day when her husband was superintending the work in his fields of *jengibre,* which was then one of the most important crops of the island, she decided

to clean out the battered old pig-skin chest which stood beside his bed. So many were the treasures she found there, that she uttered one exclamation of delight after another. But why this old weather-beaten leathern pouch? She opened it. More treasures: some little ivory Buddhas, a carved knife, a roll of strange-embroidered silk, a packet of faded papers. . . . But what are these ugly dried things in the bottom? Stepping to the open window, Amelia held the pouch upside down and shook the dry brown things out upon the ground, where they were scattered by the breeze.

Soon a heavy mountain shower came up. *The brown things were beaten into the soil of Porto Rico.* Time passed, with the usual succession of sun and wind and rain. . . .

One day the wife of Diego Vargas came to him with a wondering look upon her face. She held out her hand. It was full of beautiful strange red berries.

"My husband, I have found these growing wild. They are very tempting but I fear that they are poisonous. Do you remember ever having seen anything like them?"

Don Diego stared at the glowing heap of berries in the cup of his wife's white hand. A dim recollection came struggling into his memory—yet what? Where had he ever seen such berries? Cautiously—for he had grown cautious—he tasted one of them. He took another. Then a light broke over his face. He remembered! At once his imagination carried him back some fifteen years. He saw himself sitting atop a swaying camel, eating great mouthfuls of these same luscious berries, while the red juice ran down over his black beard. But how had such berries ever come halfway around the world to find a

home in the mountains of Porto Rico? For a long time this remained a mystery. Don Diego sent *peons* searching over the hills, but they found no more berries. He served them to visitors. No one had ever tasted them before, though all marvelled at their delicacy and color.

One day Diego Vargas went looking for something in his old pig-skin chest. The Cordovan-leather pouch caught his eye. Just then his young son ran into the room, eating some of the delicious fruit. Instantly Don Diego remembered the little Hindu urchins who had cheated him by filling the bottom of a basket with dried berries! He hastened to his wife. "Amelia, did you once empty something from this pouch?" he cried.

"Naught but some ugly brown, dried things," she answered, surprised, "which I threw out of the window."

Don Diego said impressively: "Then *you* are the first person who ever planted the red berries in Porto Rico, and *I* am the one who brought the seeds all the way from far-off India! We shall keep the secret of growing this fruit in our family. Our son and his son, and all our descendants, shall cultivate these berries for the delight of our friends and the renown of our name!"

So it happened that for many years the wonderful, refreshing berries were grown only by the descendants of Diego Vargas de Guzmán. But in time the old family died out. The ancient ginger plantation was deserted and weed-grown. The bushes of the red fruit spread without cultivation, over the hillsides. . . .

And that is the story of the *fresas* which grow wild in Porto Rico today, and why they are found in no other island of the West Indies.

THE END